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THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST APOSTLES

*Nine Studies Covering the Work and Writings of
Peter, John, James, and Jude, and the Pro-
duction of the Synoptic Gospels, the Acts,
and the Epistle to the Hebrews*

By

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ABRIDGED FROM
"STUDIES IN THE EARLY CHURCH"
With Valuable Additions

CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE
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CHRONOLOGY¹

STUDY I

	Month or Season	Year A.D.
The Ascension of Christ	Thursday, May 18, ²	30
Day of Pentecost, and coming of the Holy Spirit,	Sunday, May 28,	30
Appointment of seven Helpers (called Deacons)		? 32

STUDY II

Martyrdom of Stephen	? 32
Martyrdom of James the Apostle	spring, 44
Death of Herod Agrippa I....After the Passover, spring,	44

STUDY III

Spread of the Jewish Christian movement through Pales- tine and Syria	32-44
James the Lord's Brother, the acknowledged leader of the Jerusalem Church	35-61
Epistle of James written	?44-50
Martyrdom of James, the Lord's Brother	61

¹It is to be understood that certainty attaches to only a few dates in the Early Church, and that this working Chronology represents careful estimates made by weighing the evidence for the dates of many of the events presented by eminent scholarly writers. Those so used are chiefly C. H. Turner, *Hast. Bib. Dict.*, art. "Chronology of the New Testament;" arts. "John the Apostle" and "Peter (Simon);" Purves; Bartlett; Moffatt; Rackham, cxii-cxv, "Chronology of the Acts;" with consultation of the remaining Early Church literature. Where more than usual uncertainty attaches to a date it is preceded by an interrogation mark.

²Estimate of S. J. Andrews, *Life of Our Lord*, pages xxvii and 637.

	Month or Season	Year A. D.
STUDY IV		
Peter at the Jerusalem Council	January-March,	50
Supposed labors in Syria		?50-57
Possible labors in eastern and northern Asia Minor,		
1 Peter 1: 1		?57-63
Supposed presence in Rome, perhaps in hiding, when		
Paul was martyred		?63-67
First Epistle of Peter, written at Rome	? winter,	?65-66

STUDY V		
Second Epistle of Peter, written at Rome.....	? winter,	?66-67
Peter's martyrdom at Rome	? autumn or winter,	?67
Epistle of Jude written		?70-80

STUDY VI		
Epistle to the Hebrews written		59-69

STUDY VII		
Gospel of Mark written		65-70
Gospel of Matthew written		67-75
Gospel of Luke written		70-80
The Acts of the Apostles written		72-82

STUDY VIII		
John at Jerusalem at the time of Paul's second visit,		
Gal. 2: 9		45, 46
John's supposed removal to Ephesus		?65
John's banishment to the Island of Patmos		?73-75
Apocalypse, probably written at Ephesus		?77

STUDY IX		
First, Second, and Third Epistles of John, written at		
Ephesus		?88-92
Gospel of John, written at Ephesus		?92-95
Death of John		?95-100

INTRODUCTION

In order to provide shorter Bible study courses for the Epworth League, the survey of the early Church has been arranged in two distinct courses of study. The first of these is here presented in nine Studies, under the title, *The Church of the First Apostles*. It excludes Paul; or, in other words, is a study of the Acts and the portion of the New Testament which follows exclusive of the life and writings of Paul. This course covers chiefly the Jewish Christian Church, and centers around Peter, John, James, and Jude, as the other course naturally covers the Gentile Christian Church and centers around Paul.

In approaching these shorter courses, it is important to observe the literature which has appeared in this field of study during the last few years, as the Studies also contain a slightly earlier view. Perhaps the most notable new tendency of this latest literature is seen in *The Date of the Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels*,¹ by Prof. Adolf Harnack, in which he proposes an earlier date for the writing of Acts, placing it about 62 A. D.—before the death of Paul—with the Gospel of Luke, of course, written earlier, and Mark earlier still. The Rev. Willoughby C. Allen, following in the same path,² would date Mark about 44 A. D., Matthew about 50 A. D., and Luke about 56-58 A. D. This tendency is mentioned here chiefly to show how the claims of some former writers that these New Testament records were produced long after their reputed authors had passed away cannot stand in the light of the latest scholarship,

¹English translation, 1911. Price, \$1.50 net.

²Willoughby C. Allen and L. W. Grensted, *Introduction to the Books of the New Testament* (1913), p. 13. Price, \$2 net.

but that the present trend is to carry the dates of these books back nearer to the time of Christ and the first Apostles rather than to remove them further away. If one glances through a wide circle of the latest literature, it is found that a majority of the recent writers date the books almost exactly as they are dated in the Studies. Therefore, one need not change the dates, as following Dr. Harnack, but only view his work as giving added strength to the positions taken.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

The following small books are specially recommended for regular reference. McClymont represents the earlier writers, the others the most recent. Each will be referred to by the name that is placed first.

McClymont. The New Testament and Its Writers. Price, 40 cents net.

Holdsworth. Gospel Origins. Price, 75 cents net.

Hayes. The Synoptic Problem. Price, 35 cents net.

Watson. The Acts of the Apostles. Smaller Cambridge Bible, Revised Edition for Schools and Colleges. Price, 50 cents net per volume.

Carr. The Epistle of James and the Epistle to the Hebrews. Same as above.

Walpole. The Revelation of St. John the Divine. Same as above.

Mitchell. Hebrews and the General Epistles. The Westminster New Testament. Price, 75 cents net per volume.

Alexander Ramsay. The Revelation and the Johannine Epistles. Same as above.

Barth. The Gospel of St. John and the Synoptic Gospels. Price, 40 cents net.

Four excellent one-volume Bible Dictionaries have been issued in recent years—Hastings, Single Volume Dictionary of the Bible; A Standard Dictionary of the Bible; Illustrated Bible Dictionary; Davis, Dictionary of the Bible, Third Revised Edition. One of these may often be found in a Sunday school or public library or the library of a pastor, and can be consulted.

In the Studies many of the standard and general reference books are referred to by the name of the author, and sometimes by initials suggesting the title of the book. Those which are used most fully are here given in the alphabetical order of these abbreviated names, followed in each case by enough of the title or description of the book so that each can be easily found or known: Bartlet, Apostolic Age—Benham, St. John and His Work—Blaikie, Bible History—C. H., Conybeare and Howson on St. Paul—Davidson, St. Peter and His Training—Dods, Introd. to N. T.—Farrar (E. D.), Early Days of Christianity—George Milligan, Theology of Hebrews—Hast. Bib. Dict., Hastings' large five vol. Dictionary—Hurlbut, Bible Atlas—N. C. B., New-Century Bible (Small vol. commentaries)—Patrick, James the Lord's Brother—Purves, Apostolic Age—Rackham, Commentary on Acts—Ramsay (Letters), Letters to the Seven Churches—Ramsay (St. P.), St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen—Shaw, The Pauline Epistles—Stevens, Theology of N. T.—William Milligan, Lectures on the Apocalypse.

In each of the Studies, under Fourth Day, these books are referred to by exact pages as bearing on the Study as a whole, and under Fifth Day as giving light on the Topics for investigation and for class work. All students and leaders should remember that this slightly earlier standard literature is not lessened in value because of the references in the Suggestions for each Study to the latest small books.

With a little effort the leader or the class can procure, in most cases, one or more volumes out of the whole range of reference books for common use during the course. Best among the smaller books for this purpose can be named McClymont, Watson, Carr, Alexander Ramsay, Davidson, Benham, R. F. Horton (See Study VII); and among the larger books, Farrar (E. D.), Bartlet, Purves, Allen and Grensted, Introduction to the Books of the New Testament.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

It is assumed that the leader has a clear grasp of the Study and a definite plan for the hour before each class session.

The aim of these Studies is to enable those who use the book to master this portion of the Bible, and to impart such a knowledge of the life and work of the early disciples of our Lord as will lead to the highest Christian character and service.

The Bible is a book of life. It came from God through life, and thus is able to touch life and lift it Godward. "So shall my word be that goeth forth . . . it shall not return unto me void." True Bible study is certain to produce a more abundant Christian life.

Always and first of all read the assigned Scripture passage for the day, and seek to get out of it what God has therein for your own heart and mind. Even in the few cases where a somewhat extended passage is set for continuous reading, read at least some part of it as your first work with the lesson for that day. Use the daily memory verse and aim to memorize some of the other selected passages.

The Narrative for the First Day in each Study is planned to give the essential facts, and to present the foremost New Testament thought in an interesting, readable form, while its Scripture quotations, in the exact words of the American Revision, still keep the reader in touch with the Word of God.

Note that in each Study, under Fifth Day, there are Topics, one or two of which can be assigned, a week in advance, for short papers or talks, but only as it increases the interest. The first Topic in each Study is a Bible reading, which can be used at the opening or closing of the lesson period, at the discretion of the leader. The spirit of the class hour should make the use of a brief period for prayer welcome and natural.

Have one or more members of the class serve as class artists, to present, on the blackboard or on sheets of paper, maps, charts, mottoes, etc., illustrating the Studies, and original posters and bulletins announcing the class sessions. The charts and mottoes in the Suggestions at the opening of each Study, based on the recent literature, are chiefly meant to be suggestive of others to be arranged by the class artists.

STUDY I

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH A NEW CREATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS AND LEADERS.

TIME, 30-32 A. D.

PLACE, Jerusalem.

REFERENCES: McClymont, 41-44; Watson, vii-xii, 1-12, 18-20, 23, 24.

KEY-WORD, Spiritual Power. "Ye shall receive power" (Acts 1: 8). The creation of the Church then and in all ages the supreme miracle and monument of God's power. Raise the question as to your relation to the work of witnessing "unto the uttermost part of the earth."

CHART

LUKE¹

1. The Companion of Paul.
2. The Physician.
3. The Musician.
4. The Artist.
5. The Gentile.
6. Of Antioch.
7. The Freedman.

MOTTO: "Without Acts the story of the first Christian Brotherhood at Jerusalem would be buried in oblivion, and we should never have heard of Pentecost."²

¹D. A. Hayes, *The Most Beautiful Book Ever Written* (1913), pp. 12-49. Price, 75 cents net.

²H. T. Andrews, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 1. The Westminster New Testament. Price, 75 cents net per volume.

October 14-1924

FIRST DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 1:8.

Read Acts 1:1-14.

Period and Meaning **NARRATIVE.**—The Church of the First Apostles has for its period the time from Christ's ascension to the death of the apostle John. While the beginnings of the Christian Church may be regarded as occurring during the ministry of Christ, it began, in its actual extension, with Pentecost, when the words of our Lord before his ascension, "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:8), had their real fulfillment. The Gospels make known the historic Christ, manifest in the flesh; while the Acts, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation make known the living Christ, manifest in the believer and the Church. And this is also the work of the Spirit, since Christ said, "He shall bear witness of me. . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John 15:26; 16:14).

The Waiting Company Among the first scenes of Luke's second work is the company of disciples, in number about one hundred and twenty, gathered in "the upper chamber" in obedience and prayer. There should be noted the eleven apostles,² the women who have attended Christ, his mother,³ and, as a new group in the circle of faith, his brethren.⁴ At the suggestion of Peter, Matthias is chosen by lot to take the place of Judas. The incident shows that Christ left the details of organization in the Church to his disciples, with a large measure of liberty. (Acts 1:12-26.)

Matthias Chosen On the day of Pentecost the promised advent of the Holy Spirit occurred. This being one of the three great Jewish festivals, there came to Jerusalem Jews and proselytes "from every nation under heaven." It fell on the fiftieth day after the day of sheaf-waving following Pass-over Sabbath,⁵ and was a thanksgiving for the gathering of the harvest. According to tradition, it also commemo-

⁵Hast. Bib. Dict., art. "Pentecost."

rated the giving of the law. The Spirit revealed himself among the Christian company in their place of assembly, to the ear, by "a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting;" and to the eye, by "tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2: 1-4.)

"And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, . . . and they were all amazed. . . . But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine." But Peter, now prepared by the Spirit, stood forth and spoke to the multitude with such incisive and thrilling power, that three thousand were converted and baptized. (Acts 2: 5-41.)

The People
Amazed

Peter's
Sermon

As a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, there appears as a fresh creation the primitive life and fellowship, pictured in the early chapters of the Acts, where the record of it alternates with accounts of the first currents of opposition to the new faith, presented in the next Study.

The New
Creation

That which is most notable at the birth of the Church is an intense religious love and joy. All who possess true faith are united to Christ, who lived in divine sympathy and lowly service among men. Devotion to him forms the bond of brotherhood.

The Bond
of Love

The first Christians still regarded themselves as Jews,⁴ continuing to visit the temple, holding their membership in the synagogues, and "having favor with all the people." (Acts 2: 46, 47; 6: 9.) But, at the same time, their union with each other was even more intimate and real, for as Christians they were "of one heart and soul," and "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." (Acts 2: 42; 4: 32.)

Primitive
Fellowship

⁴Davidson, 94.

Signs of Unity So all-controlling was their oneness of life that it soon resulted in a community of goods. This feature was entirely spontaneous and free, and after it had served its purpose as an object-lesson, it passed away as quietly and spontaneously as it came.⁵ A more permanent sign of unity was the holy supper, probably observed in the evening, at the close of a common meal.

Power in Work Miracles To the leaders of the primitive faith was given the power to work miracles. Thus, as Peter and John were entering the temple, Peter's word to the lame man invoking "the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," resulted in his cure, so that he leaped up and "entered with them into the temple, . . . praising God." "They even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at least his shadow might overshadow some one of them. And there also came together the multitude from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one." (Acts 2:43; 3:4-8; 4:21, 22; 5:15, 16.)

The Scene Shadowed Under these conditions the primitive Church made steady and rapid progress. (Acts 2:47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7.) Yet the bright scene of dawning Christianity was shadowed by the falseness and tragic fate of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), and the danger to Church harmony which grew out of race feeling; for "there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full

⁵It may be said to have remained in principle in the alms or collections gathered for the poor in the Early Church, as by Paul among Gentile Christians for the needy disciples in Judea (Rom. 15:25, 26), which, as is noted by Rackham, page 42, the apostle calls a communion or fellowship (2 Cor. 8:4.)

of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and ²Philip, and ³Prochorus, and ⁴Nicanor, and ⁵Timon, and ⁶Parmenas, and ⁷Nicolaus a proselyte of Antioch; whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them." (Acts 6:1-6.)

Every incident selected by the author of the Acts for narration is regarded by him as representative, and stands for some new turning-point in the development of the Church.

ct 15 SECOND DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 2:4.

Read Acts 2:1-13. Luke, a physician and Gentile, perhaps of Philippi or Syrian Antioch, closely associated with St. Paul from about 50 A. D. to the close of the apostle's life, is the author of the Acts, as well as the Gospel of Luke, to which he refers as the "former treatise" (Acts 1:1). He addresses Theophilus, who is supposed to be a Roman official and a Christian.⁶ For further statement regarding the Acts see Study VII. Augustine called Pentecost the "birthday" of the Holy Spirit. As Christ was existent before he became incarnate and was born at Bethlehem, so the Holy Spirit was existent and even present in the world before his definite advent at Pentecost. He now came in a peculiar way to dwell within believers and to act as the divine representative in the Church on earth.

SCRIPTURE SCHEME.

Preface, Acts 1:1, 2; Christ's closing instructions and ascension, 1:3-11; The Church in prayer and council, 1:12-26;

⁶Bartlet, 170, 410, 415.

Advent of the Spirit, 2: 1-4; The people astonished, 2: 5-13; The first sermon, 2: 14-36; The converts, 2: 37-41; The primitive Church instructed, 2: 42; 6: 2-4; Its fellowship, love, and worship, 2: 44-46; 3: 1; 4: 32-37; 6: 1; Its power to work miracles, 2: 43; 3: 2-10; 5: 12-16; Its growth, 2: 47; 6: 7; Hypocrisy punished, 5: 1-11; Seven helpers chosen, 6: 5, 6.

Oct 16

THIRD DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 2: 33.

Read Acts 2: 14-41. Notice that Peter's sermon, perhaps the most effective one ever preached, honors three things: the Scriptures, the² Christ, and the³ Holy Spirit. The Spirit can always use the written and the living Word in preparing men for the kingdom of God.

MAP AND LESSON OUTLINE.

The Early Church, from Pentecost till the death of John.
Disciples waiting in the upper room.
Matthias chosen in place of Judas.
The coming of the Holy Spirit.
Peter's sermon brings conviction.
Three thousand converted and baptized.

1. *Jerusalem the center from which Christian light spreads, beginning with Pentecost (30 A. D.)*

The Church ■ new creation of the Holy Spirit.
Divine, religious love the bond of brotherhood.
Jewish Christians form the foundation.
Evidences of the unity of all the disciples.
Apostles having power to work miracles.
Lame man cured, and Peter's address.
The scene shadowed, and the seven helpers.

The student, in notebook, which it is always stimulating and helpful to use, and the class artist, for the class hour, can enlarge Map 1, extending from Rome eastward to the country of the Parthians; and by lines from Jerusalem as a center to the locations from which the peoples present at Pentecost had come (Acts 2: 9-11), it can be indicated how widely, and how fully in every direction,

the new gospel light would be carried, when the peoples returned to their homes. Jerusalem is a strategic center, as respects Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Oct 17 FOURTH DAY. Memory Verses, Acts 2:46, 47.

Read Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37. In these passages five features in the life of the first Christians may be noted:

- ① Instruction. This properly follows discipleship and baptism, according to Christ's words in Matt. 28:19, 20.
- ② Christian fellowship, than which nothing tends more fully to inspire the soul.
- ③ The Lord's Supper.
- ④ Prayer.
- ⑤ Community of goods.



MAP I. FROM ROME TO PARTHIA
Gospel Light Spreading from Jerusalem

GENERAL REFERENCES.

Purves, secs. 1-49; Bartlet, i—xliv, 1-18, 23-25, 27-29, 459-480, 493-496; Blaikie, 451-454; McClymont, 41-45; Stevens, 258-275; Ramsay (St. P.), 19-28, 363-365, 372-375; C. H., 69; Shaw, 12-16; Davidson, 91-97; Benham, 40, 41; Patrick, 76-79.

Oct 18 FIFTH DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 3:6.

Read Acts 3:1-10; 5:12-16. The readings now turn to the miraculous power given to the apostles, of which the healing of the lame man is a carefully described example.

Then follows the more general statement as to miracle-working, with notice of its extension to cases brought from towns outside of Jerusalem.

TOPICS FOR PERSONAL INVESTIGATION AND FOR ASSIGNMENT
IN CLASS WORK.

1. The descent and dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Matt. 3: 11; John 16: 7; Acts 1: 5; 2: 1-4, 16-18, 33; 11: 15, 16.
2. St. Luke as a man and writer. Ramsay (St. P.), 1-28, 200-210, 386-390; Rackham, xv—xxxvi; Hast. Bib. Dict.
3. The Jews. Bartlet, xxi—xxx; C. H., 14-17, 26-29; Stalker, 73-75; Farrar (St. P.), 65, 76; Bib. Dict.
4. Proselytes of different classes. C. H., 28, 29; Ramsay (St. P.), 43; Orr, *The Early Church*, 5.
5. The Apostles, nature of their office and authority. Purves, secs. 7, 24-26; Bartlet, 11; Hast. Bib. Dict., I, 126, 432-438.
6. The Lord's Supper; frequency, time, place, manner of observance, at this period. Bartlet, 465-471.
7. The Temple and the Beautiful Gate. Rackham, 46, 47; Hurlbut, 140, 141; Bib. Dict.
8. The Church, early use and meaning of the term. Purves, sec. 100; Bartlet, 18, 28, 29, 459, 460.
9. Barnabas. Farrar (St. P.), 132-134, 161, 162, 189-195; Bib. Dict.
10. The exact office of the seven men chosen. Hast. Bib. Dict., art. "Deacon."

Oct 18

SIXTH DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 5: 11.

Read Acts 5: 1-11. The language of Peter (verse 4) makes it plain that the devotion of one's property was a wholly voluntary matter, and that the divine judgment which Ananias and Sapphira called down upon themselves was entirely due to their own motives and actions. Verses 5 and 11 and 2: 43, show that there is a place for fear as well as love in Christianity. Note the first use in the Acts of the term "church" (verse 11).

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS.

- Gospel of Luke
1. What two books did Luke write? *Acts*
 2. To whom does he dedicate or address both writings? *to Theophilus*
 3. Where was the work of witnessing to begin? - *Jerusalem*
 4. What was to be its geographical limit? *uttermost parts of the earth*
 5. In what ways was the coming of the Holy Spirit manifested? *rushing wind - tongues of fire - all began to speak with other*
 6. Who are meant by Grecian Jews (Acts 6: 1)? - *people from Greece* *tongue*
 7. Give four or five reasons for the success of the primitive Church. - *Based on principles of Jesus* *Had Christian fellowship*
Earnest *It had received the Holy Spirit*
Prayer *Ceased not to preach and teach*
Jesus Christ.

SEVENTH DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 6: 7.

Read Acts 6: 1-7. This passage, like those of the three preceding days, bears upon the inner order and economy of the Church. It is remarkably full of light upon a wide range of points, and will repay most careful study.

PERSONAL THOUGHT.

"To you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." (Acts 2: 39.)

Is there any limit to this promise? Am I conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life? Do I work with a power which cannot be explained on human grounds, or am I powerless to accomplish spiritual results? Can a spiritual work be done apart from the Holy Spirit? Have I received ~~him~~ *him*?

STUDY II

THE FIRST WAVES OF PERSECUTION

SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS AND LEADERS.

TIME, 32-44 A. D.

PLACE, Jerusalem.

REFERENCES: McClymont, 45; Watson, 12-17, 20-31, 39, 51-54.

KEY-WORD, Martyr Faith. The line of martyrs for Jesus stars Christian history and breaks opposition in every field. Two hundred foreign missionary and 25,000 native Christian martyrs in China in 1900. Now the old order there gone forever, and Christian standards welcomed.

CHART

CONTRASTED JEWISH PARTIES ¹	
<u>Pharisees</u>	<u>Sadducees</u>
Nationalists.	Admirers of Rome.
Patriots.	Office Seekers.
Loved Name of Messiah.	Hated Name of Messiah.
Held to the Resurrection.	Denied the Resurrection.
Believed in Future Life.	Disbelieved in Future Life.
Tended to Favor Christians.	Sought to Destroy Christians.
Both United Against Christians After the Death of Stephen.	

MOTTO: "The Peter of the Book of Acts has become a man of rock."²

¹William M. Ramsay, Pictures of the Apostolic Church (1910), pp. 44, 45. Price, \$1.50 net.

²Lynn Harold Hough, The Men of the Gospels (1913), p. 22. Price, 50 cents net.

FIRST DAY. Memory Verse, Matt. 10: 20.

Read Matt. 10: 16-23.

NARRATIVE.—“I came not to send peace, but a sword.” **A New Spiritual Force**
 “If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”
These sayings of Christ revealed the certainty that the peaceful relations of the primitive Church with Judaism could not continue. Though the disciples were Jewish in their adhesion to synagogue and temple worship, they were also fervent in preaching Jesus and the resurrection. At first they were borne with by the Jewish leaders, as forming merely one more sect, perhaps in common thought resembling Essenes.

The first signs of friction came when Peter preached the sermon recorded in Acts 3: 11-26, after the healing of the lame man. Naturally the first note of alarm arose from the Sadducean office-holders. “And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow.” (Acts 4: 1-3.) **Sadducees Alarmed**
First Arrest

When they appeared before the Sanhedrin the next day, the rulers were astonished at their bold defense, since they recognized that they were “unlearned and ignorant men . . . and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” But as the man who was healed stood with them, it was not easy to visit punishment upon them, and after they were threatened they were discharged. (Acts 4: 5-22.) **Bold Defense and Release**

Realizing that a more severe crisis of opposition was at hand, the apostles returned to their company and held a prayer-meeting. **Prayer-Meeting**
 God answered with power, and “the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” Thus en-

couraged, they went on confidently with their public work. (Acts 4: 23-31.)

Sadducees

Again

Jealous

The next occasion of jealousy on the part of the rulers was the large increase of miracle-working, as noted in the previous lesson. The people began to come for healing from the towns about Jerusalem; and the alarm caused by the sudden popularity of the new sect led to the second

Second

Arrest

arrest and imprisonment, this time of all the apostles. Once more they were assured of divine watch-care, for "an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said, Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this Life. And when they heard this, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught." Presently, before the Sanhedrin, Peter and the other apostles still more pointedly asserted the guilt of the rulers in the death of Christ; and they would doubtless have been killed had not the Pharisee, Gamaliel, reputed to be a grandson of the mild Hillel, advised submission of the issue to the decision of Providence. "To him they agreed," and the apostles were beaten, released, and resumed their gospel labors. So closed the first two impulses of persecution, which had been chiefly due to the Sadducees. (Acts 5: 17-42.)

Pharisees

and People

Aroused

The third and more violent wave of persecution came rather from the Pharisees and the people inflamed against Stephen, because of alleged utterances concerning the temple and the law. There is no clear proof that Stephen had made such statements as were attributed to him. But it is probable that in the synagogue of the Cilicians and Asians,³ of which the young Cilician, Saul, may have been a member, Stephen had been more than a match for those who argued against the truth of the gospel. (Acts 6: 8, 9.)

"They were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake," and when he was arraigned be-

³Rackham, 90; Hast. Bib. Dict., IV, 614.

fore the Sanhedrin, "all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts 6:9, 10, 15). Stephen's fervid historical and prophetic address shows that he had grasped much of the inner spirit of Christ's message to the nation, and when, at the close, he thrust home the fact that the leaders of Israel "received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not" (Acts 7:53), his judges would not listen to another word. In a tumult, without form of law or observance of the bounds of their power under Roman rule, they hurried him out of the city and stoned him to death. (Acts 6:10—7:58.)

Stephen's
Trial

The example of the first martyr has ever been an inspiration to the Church. His glowing face and expiring prayer smote the heart of young Saul, and doubtless eventually proved potent factors in his conversion. After Stephen "fell asleep" persecution burst forth against the whole Church. The apostles remained in Jerusalem, but that city was no longer the exclusive field of the new faith.

The First
Martyr

Toward the close of this period a second persecution broke out against the Church in Jerusalem through Herod Agrippa I, who "killed James the brother of John with a sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also." Through the prayers of the Church, Peter was delivered by an angel out of the prison; and soon after the king was smitten and died in agony. "But the word of God grew and multiplied." (Acts 12:1-24.)

Herod's
Opposition
and Death

In the study of the Acts, we must remember that Luke expects a great deal of his readers. He never points the moral for us, and rarely states the inference he would have us make.

SECOND DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 3:19.

Read Acts 3:11-26. This sermon of Peter's, as well as that on the day of Pentecost, is very important as re-

vealing the simple, primitive form of the first missionary preaching.⁴ There could not be a better evidence that the record is genuine than is given by what these early discourses do not say, as well as the things which they do contain.

SCRIPTURE SCHEME.

Peter's second sermon, which led to the first opposition, Acts 3: 11-26; First arrest and imprisonment of Peter and John, 4: 1-22; On their release, meeting for praise and prayer, 4: 23-31; Second arrest, imprisonment, and trial of the apostles, 5: 17-42; Arrest, trial, and martyrdom of Stephen, 6: 8—7: 60; His burial, 8: 2; Persecution by Herod Agrippa I, 12: 1-3; Peter's imprisonment and deliverance, 12: 4-19a; Herod's visit to Cæsarea and death, 12: 19b-23; Growth of the Church, 9: 31; 12: 24.

THIRD DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 4: 13.

Read Acts 4: 1-31. Note particularly (verses 5, 6) that the high-priestly family, who are known to be Sadducees, and who were the first to check the apostles, are the same ones who most bitterly opposed Christ. Note also the boldness or courage given by prayer and the presence of Jesus through the Spirit (verses 13, 29, 31).

MAP AND LESSON OUTLINE.

- A new spiritual force at work in Jerusalem.
- Alarm of the Sadducees, and arrest of Peter and John.
- The two apostles threatened and discharged.
- Meeting of the Church for prayer.
- Arrest and imprisonment of all the apostles.
- They are delivered by an angel, and again speak in the temple.
- Arraignment before the Sanhedrin.
- The advice of Gamaliel.
- The apostles beaten and released.
- The Pharisees and the people inflamed against Stephen.
- His defense before the Sanhedrin.

⁴For a helpful statement of the primitive apostolic teaching and the substance of Peter's preaching, see Purves, sections 45-48.

2. *Stephen's course from hall of the Sanhedrin to place of his martyrdom* (32 A. D.).

Persecution arises against the whole Church.

Later martyrdom of James the apostle.

Deliverance of Peter from prison.

3. *Peter's course from prison to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark and on leaving Jerusalem* (44 A. D.).

Death of Herod Agrippa I.

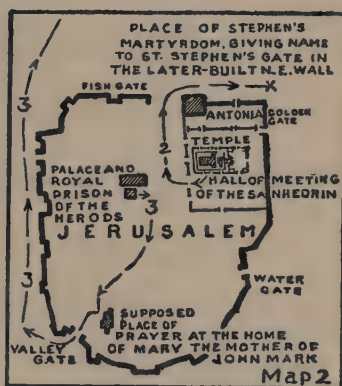
Continued growth of the movement.

An enlarged map of Jerusalem, from Map 2, can be made, and the course of Stephen from the hall of the Sanhedrin⁵ to the place of his martyrdom (supposed to be near the later St. Stephen's Gate⁶) and of Peter from the prison⁷ to the house of Mary,⁸ the mother of John Mark, and on leaving Jerusalem, can be indicated. There is some light from tradition, but no certainty as to the several locations.

FOURTH DAY. Memory

Verse, Acts 5:42.

Read Acts 5:17-42. The popularity of the apostles, because of their healing power, aroused the "jealousy" of the proud, official Sadducees (verse 17). The early Christians also learned that the success of their cause required them to be fearless "witnesses" (verse 32).



MAP 2. JERUSALEM
Stephen and Peter in Times of
Persecution

⁵Hast. Bib. Dict., IV, 399; Hurlbut, 141, 142.

⁶C. H., 77; Hast. Bib. Dict., IV, 614.

⁷Rackham, 177; Hast. Bib. Dict., IV, 103.

⁸Edersheim, *Life of Jesus the Messiah*, II, 485; Andrews, *Life of Our Lord*, 452, 498; Rackham, 176; Hast. Bib. Dict., III, 286.

GENERAL REFERENCES.

Purves, secs. 49-61, 98, 99, 107; Bartlet, 18-27, 30-33, 61, 62, 217; Blaikie, 453-456, 462, 463; McClymont, 44, 45; Stevens, 272-274; Ramsay (St. P.), 375-377; C. H., 61-65, 71-80, 100, 109; Stalker, 35, 36; Farrar (St. P.), 59-62, 76-95; Davidson, 95-99, 104, 105; Benham, 41; Hast. Bib. Dict., art. "Stephen."

FIFTH DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 6:10.

Read Acts 6:8-15. "What an impetuous power this Galahad of the cross must have had! It is hard to think of him as otherwise than young, with all the glad bravery and faith of youth shining from his eyes. But his force was not unbalanced violence. His speech before the Sanhedrin gives the impression of self-restraint and quiet power. . . . There is a blending of strength and sweetness, of impetuosity and gentleness, in Stephen that is strangely touching." (Rauschenbusch.)

TOPICS FOR PERSONAL INVESTIGATION AND FOR ASSIGNMENT
IN CLASS WORK.

1. The convicting and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. John 3:5-8; 16:8-11; Acts 2:14-16, 37; 5:29-33; 1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Cor. 2:4; Titus 3:5.
2. The view of Jesus as Servant and Prophet in Peter's sermon. Bartlet, 19; Adeney, 121, 123; Stevens, 265, 266.
3. The political and social influence of the Sadducees and Pharisees. Bartlet, xxxi—xxxiv; Hast. Bib. Dict.
4. Gamaliel. C. H., 62, 63, 71, 72; Hast. Bib. Dict.
5. Place of the synagogue in the Jewish life of that day. C. H., 66-71; Hast. Bib. Dict.
6. Sketch of Stephen and his work. Purves, secs. 54-59; Farrar (St. P.), 76-95.
7. Construct a plan of Stephen's speech. Bartlet, 31, 32; Stiffer, 61-67.
8. Gain a clear idea of "rulers," "elders," "scribes," "high-priest" (Acts 4:5, 6); "doctor of the law" (v. 34); "council," "senate" (v. 21). Bib. Dict.
9. Herod Agrippa I. Farrar (St. P.), 174-181; Hist. Geog. H. L., 619-621.

SIXTH DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 7: 35.

Read Acts 7: 1—8: 1. Seek to grasp the breadth of Stephen's view of Hebrew history. God has produced progress by changes and through deliverers whom the people had often first rejected. Therefore the change to Christ, "the Righteous One" (verse 52), whom Moses himself had foretold, and whom God would make their final deliverer (verses 35-37), would be to follow the divine order. This his conclusion was cut short by their burst of wrath; but he stands in the succession of the prophets and of his Master.⁹

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS.

1. What was Solomon's Porch (Acts 3: 11)?
2. What conditions appear, in 3: 16, 19, 22, for receiving the saving power of Christ?
3. What complete ground of salvation is given in 4: 11, 12?
4. Who were prominent members of the high-priestly family (4: 6)?
5. Why may we believe that Stephen's words and death influenced Saul?
6. What "James" is meant in Acts 12: 17?

SEVENTH DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 12: 24.

Read Acts 12: 1-24. Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, after several extensions of the region over which he bore rule, by the addition through the Emperor Claudius of Judea and Samaria, in 41 A. D., governed the same territory as his famous grandfather. It is in accord with his known character, that, to please the unbelieving Jews, he should persecute the Christians. This occurred near the close of his brief reign over Judea, of three years, and seems to have been confined to Jerusalem. The death of Herod Agrippa I, after the Passover, in the

⁹Stevens, 272, 273.

year 44 A. D., is the most certain date in Early Church history, and one upon which practically all scholars agree.¹⁰

PERSONAL THOUGHT.

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." (Acts 8:4, A. V.)

The storms of persecution which scattered the early Christians were intended to sweep this new sect from the face of the earth. They proved to be the winds which scattered the seed.

May not many of the things which seem to me to be hardships, or which seem to be subversive of the will of God, be his way of preparing for the harvest? Could any more potent effect have come to the Early Church than the persecutions which purified it and were the means of extending it throughout the world?

¹⁰Purves, p. 315; C. H., 109; Davidson, 45; Moffatt, 84, 97; Weizsacker, *The Apostolic Age*, I, 77; *Hast. Bib. Dict.*, I, 416, 424.

STUDY III

THE JEWISH CHRISTIAN CHURCH EXPANDING AND INSTRUCTED BY JAMES

SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS AND LEADERS.

TIME, 32-50 A. D.

PLACE, Judea and Samaria.

REFERENCES: Acts—McClymont, 46; Watson, xi, xii, xxi,
31-35, 39, 40, 48, 49.

James—McClymont, 123-129; Carr, 1-55;
Mitchell, 26-39, 180-230.

KEY-WORD, Growth. Rackham says, "The word *scatter-abroad* (Acts 8: 1) is derived from the word sowing." Christian growth a great process of sowing, gathering, resowing. Trace the planting, growing, fruiting idea in James (1: 18, 21; 3: 18; 5: 7).

CHART

LEADING IDEAS OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES¹

Dangers of	{	Riches,	Value of	{	Trials,
		Speech,			True Faith,
		Strife,			Wisdom,
		Worldliness.			Prayer.

MOTTO: "The Letter bears a distinct flavor of primitiveness."²

¹Hastings, *Single Volume Dictionary of the Bible* (1909). Price, \$5 net.

²Davis, *Dictionary of the Bible, Third Revised Edition* (1911). Price, \$2.50.

FIRST DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 8:1.

Read Acts 8:1, 4-8.

The Church Expanding NARRATIVE.—The primitive Church had begun to respond to the influences which would make it too broad for the limits of Judaism; but for the time its workings were confined to the members or recognized proselytes of the Jewish faith. This expansion had its foregleam in the choice of the “seven men” (Acts 6:6). They all have Greek names, and “Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch,” shows that the Church was ready to make one who was not a Jew an office-bearer. Stephen, by his grasp of the spiritual purpose of Christianity, gave a further impulse in this direction, and the persecution which arose after his death scattered the Church, and carried the seeds of gospel truth over a wide field.

Disciples Scattered Abroad After Stephen’s death “there arose a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, . . . and went about preaching the word.” And some “traveled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews” (Acts 8:1, 4; 11:19). The general outline is first drawn, and then particular fields and workers are taken up.

Philip’s Work at Samaria One of the seven, Philip, “went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ.” His ministry of the word was accompanied by cures of the sick and the lame, and the casting out of “unclean spirits.” Multitudes believed, “and there was much joy in that city.” Simon, a famous sorcerer, gave his adhesion to Philip’s preaching, and was baptized. (Acts 8:5-13.)

Visit of Peter and John When the apostles at Jerusalem heard of this work of grace, they sent Peter and John, “who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. . . . Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” “They had been bap-

tized into the name of the Lord Jesus." Simon sought to purchase the power of bestowing the Spirit, but was sharply rebuked by Peter, who used the words, "I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (verse 23), which seem to show that Simon was not a true believer. After preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans, the two apostles returned to Jerusalem. (Acts 8:14-25.)

Philip was next directed to go toward the south, and on the road toward Gaza³ had the memorable interview with "a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians." He was the queen's treasurer, probably a Jewish proselyte, and had been to Jerusalem to worship, and, when joined by Philip, was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. He was guided to immediate faith in Christ, baptized, "and went on his way rejoicing." Philip's farther course was through the coast cities from Azotus to Cæsarea, where he seems to have settled. (Acts 8:26-40; 21:8.)

Philip
and the
Ethiopian
Treasurer

Peter did similar evangelizing work during this period and in almost the same region as that last named, before he was led to preach to Gentiles. This was after the persecution by Saul had closed, and "the church throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied." At Lydda Peter healed Æneas, who was palsied, and many at that place and throughout Sharon "turned to the Lord." At Joppa he raised to life Tabitha or Dorcas, and there also "many believed on the Lord." Afterward Peter remained at Joppa for a time with Simon a tanner. (Acts 9:31-43.)

Peter at
Lydda and
Joppa

³Says Robinson: "When we were at Tell-el-Hesy, and saw the water standing along the bottom of the adjacent wady, we could not but remark the coincidence of several circumstances with the account of the eunuch's baptism. This water is on the most direct road from Eleutheropolis to Gaza."

**Situation
for the Let-
ter of James**

According to Bartlet, "We have an excellent situation for the Epistle of James, if we imagine it sent forth with believing Jews as they returned from the Passover any time between 44 and 49 A. D. . . . The constant flow of pilgrims to Jerusalem, especially to the great feasts, would make him familiar with the actual conditions of life and the besetting sins of his brethren of the Dispersion; and there would be sufficient similarity of conditions in Jewish communities everywhere to make his own experience in Palestine a fair point of departure."⁴

**Author
and Date**

The Epistle of James is ascribed by nearly all writers to James, the brother of our Lord, and there is a strong tendency to date the letter between 40 and 50 A. D.⁵ It would thus become the earliest writing in the New Testament. Although James and the others named in Mark 6:3—James, Judas, and Simon—were doubtless own brothers of Jesus, growing up together with him in the home at Nazareth, the Gospels show that they did not believe in him as the Messiah till after his resurrection, and it was, perhaps, Christ's appearance to James which convinced him.⁶

**Position in
the Early
Church**

He is first mentioned in the Acts after the death of James the son of Zebedee⁷ and Peter's deliverance out of prison, as recounted in Study II. The circumstances show that he was already a person of distinction among the disciples. When Peter, for safety, retired from the city, he requested that word be given "unto James, and to the brethren" (Acts 12:17). From this point onward James

⁴Bartlet, 232, 233.

⁵Patrick, 98; Purves, secs. 143, 146; Shaw, 19. The last named would make First Thessalonians the very earliest New Testament writing, but indicates that the Epistle of James is almost of the same date, and probably as early as 50 A. D.

⁶John 7:5; 1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 1:14.

⁷Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, 62, remarks "The death of James probably led to the substitution of James the Lord's brother in his place."

appears to hold a position of great importance, so that he has been called the bishop of Jerusalem, though it is probable that his power was personal rather than official. He presides at the council which is held there about 50 A. D., after Paul's first missionary journey, to determine the status of the Gentile converts, makes the decisive speech, and prepares the form of the decree which is sent forth. Again, about eight years later, at the close of Paul's third missionary journey, James was still the head of the Jerusalem Church, and gave the great apostle counsel, which was well intended, but resulted in the fierce attack made upon him by the unbelieving Jews. Tradition says that James was a Nazirite, and, though a Christian, retained a remarkable reputation with all the Jews for sanctity and devotion to prayer; that he never left Jerusalem, but died there as a martyr, in the year 61 or 62 A. D., through the opposition of the last of the high-priestly sons of Annas or Hanan.

Great interest attaches to the character of James because of his relation to the Lord Jesus. Says Mayor: **Relation to Christ**
 "The constant intercourse with him who was full of grace and truth in childhood as in manhood, must have prepared James to find in the Ten Commandments no mere outward regulations, but an inner law of liberty and love written in the heart." Especially can the careful observer see in the Epistle of James the reflection of the thoughts of the Sermon on the Mount. "We feel that he has his eye ever on his Holy Brother as he writes."⁸

One is also impressed with the lofty moral ideal of James. All that is best in Judaism seems to find a voice in him. Now he speaks with the tone of Moses the law-giver; again we might fancy we were in the presence of one of the Hebrew prophets, like Elijah, Isaiah, or Micah; **Lofty Moral Standard**

⁸Bartlet, 247.

and anon are heard the quiet strains of the wisdom books of the Old Testament.

**Qualities
and Lead-
ing Ideas**

The Epistle is extremely practical and searching. It does not follow a logical order, but takes up theme after theme, and goes directly to the heart of each new topic, treating it in the plainest and most straightforward manner, and then enforcing it with vivid phrases, rapid questions, and graphic comparisons. The style has been compared to that of a fiery prophetic oration rather than that of a letter. Among its leading ideas are temptation and the course of sin which starts in the desires and the will and ends in spiritual death; the evil world as set over against God as the Father of lights; pure religion, practical goodness, wisdom, patience, humility, purity; the control of the tongue; rebuke of pride, boasting, sensuous pleasures, injustice; confession of sin, prayer, and efforts to save the wayward. Among its most celebrated contrasts is that between hearing and doing, and between a faith that is a mere profession and a genuine faith shown by good works. (James 1—5.)

Luke's is the modest art that hides itself, and to appreciate his work we must contemplate it long and faithfully, as one scans an old masterpiece. For those who are familiar with a Pauline Epistle it would be wise to note down the contrasts between James and Paul, both in content and style.

SECOND DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 8:25.

Read Acts 8:9-25. Note the surprising promptness with which the Jewish Christians come into touch with the people of Samaria, in contrast with their distance from each other during Christ's ministry. The Samaritans would easily welcome those whom Jerusalem rejected, and the bestowal of the Spirit through the agency of the two apos-

tolie delegates would cement the bond between Samaritan and Jewish believers.

SCRIPTURE SCHEME.

The Church scattered by persecution, Acts 8: 1, 4; 11: 19; Philip at Samaria, 8: 5-13; Samaritan visit of Peter and John, 8: 14-25; Philip and the Ethiopian treasurer, 8: 26-39; Philip's course to Cæsarea, 8: 40; Peter at Lydda and Joppa, 9: 32-43.

James: Greeting, James 1: 1; Trials and steadfastness, 1: 2-18; Hearing and doing, 1: 19-27; Respect of persons, 2: 1-13; Faith and works, 2: 14-26; Control of the tongue, 3: 1-12; Wisdom, peace, and humility, 3: 13-4: 17; Oppression, judgment, and patience, 5: 1-12; Prayer, confession, and soul-winning, 5: 13-19.

THIRD DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 8: 35.

Read Acts 8: 26-40. This passage is full of delightfully practical points. In verses 29, 30 is one on instant obedience: "The Spirit said, Go . . . and Philip ran." Find many others.

MAP AND LESSON OUTLINE.

The early Jewish Christian Church expanding.
Gentile inclusion to be the goal.
The disciples scattered by persecution.

4. *Philip's course from Jerusalem to Samaria (†32 A. D.).*
Philip's evangelistic work in Samaria.
4. *Course of Peter and John to Samaria (†32 A. D.).*
Their prayer and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
5. *Return journey of Peter and John (†32 A. D.).*
6. *Course of the eunuch from Jerusalem to Gaza (†32 A. D.).*
7. *Philip's southward course from Samaria (†32 A. D.).*
The eunuch's instruction and baptism.
- 8, 9, 10, 11. *Philip's course to Cæsarea (†32-33 A. D.).*
12. *Peter's course to Lydda (†32-35 A. D.).*
The healing of Æneas.

10. *Peter's course to Joppa (34-36 A. D.).*

Dorcas raised from the dead.

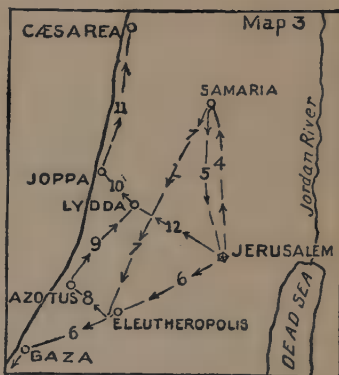
The writing of the
Epistle of James.

Position of James in
the early Church.

His relation to Christ.

Qualities and ideas of
his Epistle.

Map 3 can be enlarged, and the several journeys of Philip, of Peter and John to Samaria and return, of the eunuch, and of Peter to Lydda and Joppa can be shown. See sections 4-10. Map 1 will illustrate locations of the Jewish Dispersion, to some sections of which the Epistle of James was probably conveyed from Jerusalem.



MAP 3. PALESTINE
Early Journeys of Philip, Peter, and John

FOURTH DAY. Memory Verse, Acts 9: 31.

Read Acts 9: 31-43. Note that the Christian movement appears to be well established in this region before Peter's visit. But, as Purves remarks,⁹ "The movement as yet was strictly a Hebrew one."

Peter delights to repeat the acts of his Master, as in attempting to walk on the water. So in his raising of Dorcas there is a close resemblance to the miracle of Christ in calling the daughter of Jairus back to life.

GENERAL REFERENCES.

Purves, secs. 64-70, 133-146; Bartlet, 33-37, 40, 41, 217-250, 279; Blaikie, 455, 456, 460, 461; McClymont, 46, 123-129; Stevens, 249-252, 273-279; Ramsay (St. P.), 20, 41, 42, 49, 51;

⁹Purves, sec. 70.

C. H., 81, 82, 87, 107; Farrar (St. P.), 144-149; Farrar (E. D.), 61, 62, 306-415; Patrick, entire; Davidson, 99, 100; Benham, 42; Hast. Bib. Dict., arts. "Philip the Evangelist," "James the Brother of the Lord," "The General Epistle of James."

FIFTH DAY. Memory Verse, James 1:5.

Read James 1:1-7, 22-27; 2:14-26. Though Christ is directly alluded to only twice in the Epistle (1:1; 2:1), note that James at the outset makes him co-equal with God in honor, and terms himself a "bond servant" of both. The early period is to be noted, seeing that the place of assembly of the Christians is still called a "synagogue" (James 2:2). Practically all writers now hold that James and Paul agree. The key to the harmony of the two is this: James uses the terms "faith apart from works" and "works" in a different sense from the meaning of the terms "faith" and "works" with Paul.

TOPICS FOR PERSONAL INVESTIGATION AND FOR ASSIGNMENT IN CLASS WORK.

1. The revelation, knowledge, wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Isa. 11:2; Luke 2:25-32; Acts 6:3, 7; James 3:17; 1. Cor. 2:6-14; Eph. 3:3-5; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Peter 1:11, 12; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Rev. 3:1; 4:1, 2, 5; 5:6.

2. Jerusalem, and its relation to the development of the Early Church. C. H., 59-71; Matheson, 9, 10, 81, 82, 116; Hast. Bib. Dict., I, 421.

3. Philip. Purves, secs. 65-68; Bib. Dict.

4. Ethiopia. Rackham, 122; Hast. Bib. Dict.

5. Points in which the Epistle of James shows teachings parallel with the Gospels. Adeney, 134, 135; Patrick, 107-113; Hast. Bib. Dict., art. "The General Epistle of James."

6. Reasons why James so slightly introduces Christian doctrines and motives. Purves, secs. 145, 146; Farrar (E. D.), 363-366.

7. Church organization as an outgrowth from the synagogue. Patrick, 113-117, 123-129; C. H., 71, 72; Purves, secs. 102, 153; Dods, 192, 193; Hast. Bib. Dict., I, 431, 433.

8. Prayer for the sick (James 5: 14-16). Patrick, 123-125; Farrar (E. D.), 400, 401.

9. The ancient uses of oil. Patrick, 124; Bib. Dict., arts. "Anointing," "Oil."

SIXTH DAY. Memory Verse, James 3: 2.

Read James 3. One of the most practical points in the whole scope of the religious life is here dealt with—the right use of the power of speech. Let Christ impose upon the tongue the law spoken of in Prov. 31: 26.

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS.

1. Why were the Samaritans reached by Jewish Christians so easily and so early?

2. Why was not the Holy Spirit given to the Samaritan converts at once?

3. In which of the early workers is the power to heal most prominent?

4. According to James, where does temptation to evil originate?

5. What is meant by "the law of liberty" (James 1: 25)?

6. Give James's idea of "faith apart from works" (2: 18, 20, 26); and then of "faith made perfect" by works (2: 22).

SEVENTH DAY. Memory Verse, James 5: 11.

Read James 5: 1-12. Could there be an evil more needing correction in our own day than that which James condemns in 4: 13—5: 6, undue devotion to worldly business, going to the length of the oppression of the poor by the rich?

PERSONAL THOUGHT.

"But the tongue can no man tame." (James 3: 8.)

Is my tongue an "unruly member?" Have I ever realized the incongruity of blessing God and cursing men with the same tongue? Are bitter words ever worthy of a Christian? Is not unkind criticism of others more hurtful to me than to them?

STUDY IV

PETER THE MAN AND WRITER OF LARGE HEART AND HOPE

SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS AND LEADERS.

TIME, of 1 Peter, about 65 A. D.

PLACE, of writer, probably Rome; of readers, Asia Minor.

REFERENCES: McClymont, 130-136; Mitchell, 39-58, 231-286.

KEY-WORDS, Suffering and Hope. Christ alive for evermore, hence our "living hope" (1 Peter 1: 3), a source of unspeakable joy (1: 8), inspiring patience, since Christ is to be revealed (1: 13), having received glory from God the Author and End of our hope (1: 21; 3: 5), and we therefore ready to give a reason for our hope to every inquirer (3: 15).

CHART

FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER¹

Style: Simple, forcible, with quick changes.

Keynotes: Salvation, hope, Christian walk.

Readers: In Asia Minor, largely Gentiles, suffering tribulation.

MOTTO: "The whole account we have of Peter gives the impression of a highly receptive and large-hearted personality."²

FIRST DAY. Memory Verse, 1 Peter 1: 3.

Read 1 Peter 1: 1-12.

NARRATIVE.—The Epistles of Peter complete the circle of action, speech, and writing of one of the two most in-

¹Davis, Dictionary of the Bible. Items from article "Peter."

²Arthur S. Peake, A Critical Introduction to the New Testament (1912), p. 92. Price, 75 cents net.

Peter's
Writings
and Life

fluent men of the Early Church. He first appears in the Gospel narrative as a disciple of John the Baptist, brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew, and given his new name of Peter, or Cephas in Aramaic, meaning a rock or stone. A few months later these brothers and their partners, James and John, are called to leave their nets and follow Christ. They form the inner group of the college of twelve apostles, and Peter becomes the leader. He appears somewhat impulsive and unstable in temperament, but whole-hearted, prompt, and bold in word and action. After his great confession of Christ's Messiahship, his office as prime leader in the new Church was confirmed, and though he gave way to fear and denied his Lord before the crucifixion, he was restored after the resurrection.

His Part
in the Acts

At Cæsarea Philippi, Peter had declared concerning his Master, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and Jesus had responded, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; . . . I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."³ Even if it were understood that Peter himself, rather than his confession, is "this rock," all the above-quoted words to him find true and sufficient fulfillment in his preaching the first sermon at Pentecost and opening the Christian way of salvation to the Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles.⁴ He so fully directed the first stage of the Christian movement that Acts 1—12 may be called "The Acts of Peter."⁵ But about 44 A. D., James, the Lord's brother, appears as leader of the Church at Jerusalem, and Peter's work was abroad, though he is present at the Jerusalem Council in 50 A. D.

His Later
Years and
Martyrdom

His further career is, for the most part, disclosed only in the uncertain light of early tradition. Perhaps the best conclusion is that he labored chiefly throughout Syria for some years after leaving Jerusalem, visited the provinces

³Matt. 16: 16-19.

⁵Rackham, xlvii.

⁴See Studies I, III.

of Asia Minor, and spent his last years in Rome.⁶ Says Rackham: "This apostle, after evangelizing the remaining provinces of Asia Minor, may have come to Rome after St. Paul's liberation. . . . We have St. Peter's First Epistle which he wrote from Rome and sent to the Christians of Asia Minor by the hands of Silvanus. . . . When this was written the Christians of Asia Minor were suffering persecution, and we should naturally assume that their persecution followed after the outbreak of persecution at Rome. St. Peter, then, was probably lying hid in Rome; and if, by so doing, he was able to cherish fragments of the broken Church and to build it up again and appoint an apostolic successor, we shall better understand the position which St. Peter won in tradition of being the founder of the Church of Rome. Ultimately, however, he was discovered by the authorities; and, not being a Roman citizen, was put to death by crucifixion in the Vatican gardens beyond the Tiber. If this happened in 67 or early in 68, it would account for the date assigned to the martyrdom of both apostles [Paul and Peter] by Eusebius."⁷

Like the Epistle of James and those which are to follow, the First Epistle of Peter belongs in the list of General or Catholic Epistles, so called because most of them are addressed to Christians in general or groups of Churches. This Epistle is addressed "to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." The list of provinces may have been used to cover Asia Minor, for which there was then no one name. While there were doubtless Jewish Christians in the Churches of this great district, "all considerations point decisively to the conclusion that St. Peter had in his mind predominantly, though probably not exclusively, Gentile

General
Epistles
and First
Peter

⁶Bartlet, 298-300; *Hast. Bib. Dict.*, art. "Peter."

⁷Rackham, 54, 512.

readers.”⁸ After the salutation, the author expresses gratitude for the Christian hope and inheritance, though present faith is attended with trial. Salvation in Christ, a mystery even to prophets and angels, is now fully proclaimed by those who minister the gospel through the Holy Spirit. Therefore let the readers be steadfast and aim at a holy life and see that they “love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, . . . by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” (1 Peter 1.) Christ is to them “a chief corner-stone, elect, precious,” but to the disobedient “a stone of stumbling.” Before those who are without, Christians are to be “honest” in their course of life and manifest their “good works.” They are to “Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.” Slaves, following the example of Christ’s sufferings, are to glorify God, even under evil masters. (1 Peter 2.) Counsels are given wives and husbands, and all are exhorted to be compassionate, tender-hearted, and humble, and patiently to endure persecutions, since Christ, though “put to death in the flesh,” has been “made alive in the spirit,” and to him they are now joined in baptism. (1 Peter 3.) The closing chapters deal largely with the same problem of triumph over tribulation, the elders are admonished, and the letter closes with brief personal allusion and greetings and a benediction. (1 Peter 4, 5.)

It will be an excellent plan to read the letter through rapidly, and then state in one sentence what conditions those to whom it was written seem to have been facing. You will then be prepared to state its main practical purpose.

SECOND DAY. Memory Verse, 1 Peter 1:22.

Read 1 Peter 1:13-25. Mark the word “hope” (verses 3, 13, 21). Peter is the apostle of hope, as Paul is of

⁸Hast. Bib. Dict., III, 783; see also Ropes, 213, 214.

faith. Observe, in verses 4, 5, that "the inheritance is preserved for the believers, and the believers for the inheritance."

SCRIPTURE SCHEME.

Salutation, 1 Peter 1: 1, 2; The hope and revelation given the believer call for a steadfast and holy life, 3-21; This new life issues in brotherly love and is nourished by the Word and built up in Christ to show forth God's excellencies, 1: 22—2: 10; The Christian society in the world and its duties, 2: 11—4: 11; Patient endurance of persecution, 12-19; Elders admonished, 5: 1-4; Closing exhortation and prayer, greetings, and benedictions, 5-14.

THIRD DAY. Memory Verse, 1 Peter 2: 9.

Read 1 Peter 2. A great law and end of all Christian privilege and attainment is set forth in verse 9: "Ye are . . . that ye may." All that we are through grace is to the end that we "may show forth the excellencies" of God.

MAP AND LESSON OUTLINE.

Brief summary of Peter's life and work.

The Epistles of Peter belong to the General or Catholic Epistles.

Address of the First Epistle of Peter.

It probably has in view chiefly Gentile readers.

The Christian's hope and inheritance.

Amid deep trials, all must aim at a holy life.

Christ is to believers "a chief corner-stone elect, precious."

Peter exhorts all to be compassionate, tender-hearted, and humble.

Joined with their Risen Lord, through baptism, they can triumph over tribulation.

87, 47, 92-102. *Supposed course of Sylvanus in conveying the Epistle from Rome to those to whom it is addressed in the provinces of Asia Minor (?winter, 765-66).*

103, 85, 57. *Course of Sylvanus in returning to Rome from Byzantium (?spring-summer, 766).*

Make a map extending from Rome eastward to include Asia Minor, and mark the course of Sylvanus to Byzantium (Constantinople), thence by sea to Sinope, thence through



MAP 20. ROME TO ASIA MINOR

Epistles of Peter

the provinces of "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1), conveying the Epistle to the Churches of these provinces, and his return by water from Byzantium to Rome. (See Map 20.)

FOURTH DAY. Memory Verse, 1 Peter 3:15.

Read 1 Peter 3. Two of the most difficult passages in the New Testament are found in verses 19, 20, relating to Christ and the spirits in prison, and in 4:6, to preaching to the dead. (See Topic 6 for references.)

GENERAL REFERENCES.

Purves, secs. 274, 283-290; Bartlet, 297-308; McClymont, 130-136; Stevens, 293-311; Farrar (E. D.), 62, 63, 72-113; Davidson, 1-112; Hast. Bib. Dict., arts. "Peter," "First Epistle of Peter."

FIFTH DAY. Memory Verse, 1 Peter 4:16.

Read 1 Peter 4. That Peter is the man and writer of large heart or catholicity is seen in the fact that students observe in this Epistle many points of connection with both the Epistle of James and the Epistles of Paul, especially the letters to the Romans and Ephesians, Paul's two most general Epistles. Peter's very breadth of soul and openness to new light led him who was once head of the narrow Jewish Church in Jerusalem to relinquish it to James and to become finally, not the autocrat, but the loving builder and guide of the Church in Rome, and to enter into Paul's views and labors.

TOPICS FOR PERSONAL INVESTIGATION AND FOR ASSIGNMENT IN CLASS WORK.

1. The spiritual life and holy functions of the Church. Acts 2:47; 5:42; 12:15; James 1:27; 5:19, 20; 1 Thess. 3:12; 5:19, 20; Gal. 5:16; 1 Cor. 14:1; 2 Cor. 8:7; Eph. 2:21, 22; Phil. 2:15, 16; 1 Tim. 3:15; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:15; 2:9; 3:14; Jude 20, 21.

2. Peter's life and character. Farrar (E. D.), 62, 63, 72-79; Davidson, 1-111; McClymont, 130, 131; Matheson, *Representative Men of the New Testament*, 88-108; N. C. B., 46-53; Cam. Bib., 33-59; Hast. Bib. Dict.

3. Bithynia. C. H., 210, 211; Bib. Dict.
4. Pontus. C. H., 215; Bib. Dict.
5. Hope (1 Peter 1: 3, 13, 21; 3: 15). McClymont, 135; Hast. Bib. Dict.
6. Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison, and the preaching to the dead (1 Peter 3: 19, 20; 4: 6). N. C. B., 234-240, 245, 246; Stevens, 304-310.

SIXTH DAY. Memory Verses, 1 Peter 5: 6, 7.

Read 1 Peter 5: 1-9. The strong and helpful qualities in Peter's character and mission seem to shine through his words in this passage—fidelity as a witness, oneness with his fellow disciples, faithful care of the flock of Christ, and firm resistance of the adversary.

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS.

1. Write down in brief outline all you can remember of Peter's life and work.
2. Name the General or Catholic Epistles.
3. To what large district is First Peter directed?
4. What facts may show Peter's breadth of spirit?
5. Which of the three chief Christian graces appear to be prominent with this apostle?
6. Of what city is "Babylon" (1 Peter 5: 13) a designation?
7. What date may be given as the time of Peter's martyrdom?

SEVENTH DAY. Memory Verse, 1 Peter 5: 10.

Read 1 Peter 5: 10-14. This Epistle may be dated about 65 or 66 A. D.; for Rome, by Nero's persecution and Paul's martyrdom in 64-65, has become "Babylon,"⁹ verse 13, and the apostle sends forth this message to strengthen the Christians in view of the new conditions that are arising.¹⁰

⁹Hast. Bib. Dict., art. "Babylon in New Testament."

¹⁰Purves, secs. 288, 289; Dods, 205.

PERSONAL THOUGHT.

"Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another." (1 Peter 5:6.)

We know where and how Peter learned the lesson which he enjoins. Have you learned it? If so, how?

STUDY V

TWO KINDRED WRITERS ARRAIGN CURRENT EVILS

SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS AND LEADERS.

TIME, of 2 Peter, about 66 A. D.; of Jude, about 80 A. D.
PLACE, of writer of 2 Peter, probably Rome; of readers, Asia Minor; of writer of Jude, probably Palestine; of readers, Palestine.

REFERENCES: 2 Peter—McClymont, 137-140; Mitchell, 58-66, 287-310. Jude—McClymont, 140-143; Mitchell, 66-70, 311-322.

KEY-WORD, Purification. Hitherto evils have been chiefly without, now they are within the Church. Hence the call is to cast out the corrupt forces, and to guard the fold lest more evils should enter. On this power of self-purification depends the continuous life of Christianity. How does it work? See next two Studies.

CHART

MAIN IDEAS OF MATERIAL COMMON TO BOTH WRITERS¹

2 Peter, Chapter 2, and Jude, verses 4-16.	} Unworthy Christians.	{ Their judgment like that of fallen angels and like that of Sodom and Go- morrah. Their conduct like that of Balaam.
--	---------------------------	--

MOTTO: "Here we have one of the urgent emergencies which frequently alarmed the leaders of the primitive Church."²

FIRST DAY. Memory Verse, 2 Peter 1: 4.

Read 2 Peter 1: 1-4.

NARRATIVE.—The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude are linked together by the fact that many

¹Willoughby Allen and L. W. Grensted, *Introduction to the Books of the New Testament*, pp. 255, 256.

²A Standard Bible Dictionary (1909), art. "Jude." Price, \$6 net.

passages or phrases in 2 Peter 2: 1—3: 3, and Jude, verses 4-18, are so nearly the same that one writer must have known the letter of the other. The views of scholars differ as to which was written first. Second Peter is the one writing of the New Testament about which there remains considerable question as to its being the work of the author to whom it is ascribed. But that it is a genuine Epistle of Peter is held by able scholars, who would date it before the Epistle of Jude.³

Author
and Date
of Second
Peter

The two Epistles bear witness to the presence of evils, not wholly new, but intensified by the character of those in whom they are embodied. A lawless tendency appears. Men professedly members of the Christian communities, but with views so perverted that they divorce faith and conduct, or else men utterly false and designing, who covertly make their way into the Churches as offering a field for their wickedness, fill both writers with alarm and indignation. Impurity, self-assertion, railing, wanton and luxurious living, and covetousness are the evils chiefly arraigned.

Evils
Arraigned

After the salutation, the writer of Second Peter calls on his readers to go on in the power of God's promises and their communion with the Divine nature, from one grade of character to another. Such progress is the condition of knowledge, and without it there is mental blindness and defect. The author's decease "cometh swiftly," but he "will give diligence," possibly through the future letter of Jude, to provide for their remembrance of his instructions. Christ "received from God the Father honor and glory," he adds, "when we were with him in the holy mount. . . . No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1.)

Peter's
Assurance
of Truth

³Dods, 232-234; Bigg, *International Critical Commentary*, 316. See also *Hast. Bib. Dict.*, II, 802, 805; III, 798.

He Describes the Coming Ungodly "But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies." It has been observed that the language of Peter here and in chapter 3:3, is predictive of the false teachers and mockers, while in Jude they have appeared. With vivid phrases and strong comparisons he reveals and condemns the corrupt life and evil purposes of these pretenders. (2 Peter 2.)

He Confirms Faith in Christ's Coming He next reminds the readers of his previous letter, and asks them to cherish the words of the apostles and prophets of the Church respecting the coming of Christ. Scoffers would taunt them with the delay of his coming. But the world had once perished with water, and it was not impossible that it might hereafter be destroyed by fire. Therefore let them seek fitness for a new world. Their own teacher, Paul, whom the writer owns as a beloved brother, wrote likewise of these things, "as also in all his epistles, . . . wherein are some things hard to be understood," and therefore, like the other Scriptures, liable to perversion. But, being forewarned, let them "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3.)

Tradition of His Last Days One story about Peter's last days may be given here, as it explains words which have become familiar. Of this tradition Davidson says: "It is true to the characteristics of the apostle, and is full of beauty. The friends of St. Peter had urged him to flee from the city to escape the persecution, for his life would be more valuable to the Church than his death. The apostle at first refused to listen, but at last yielded to their counsel and fled. As he left the city he had a vision of his risen Lord hastening thither. St. Peter at once recognized him, and said, '*Domine, quo vadis?*' 'Lord, whither goest thou?' The Lord answered, 'I go again to be crucified in thy stead.' St. Peter at once answered, 'I go to obey thy command,'

and retracing his steps he went and delivered himself up to prison and death. There is a tradition that he asked to be crucified with his head downwards, counting it too great honor to be crucified as his Master.”⁴

The Epistle of Jude gained very early and strong approval considering its brevity; but no thought seems to have been given in primitive times to the person of its author. However, it is now agreed on all hands that Jude was a brother of James, the head of the Church in Jerusalem. He therefore belonged to the family of our Lord, and is the Judas mentioned in the list of Christ’s brothers in the Gospels. As a younger brother, he modestly subscribes himself “a brother of James.” Yet much deference was paid to the relatives of Christ in the early Church. The letter of Jude is now dated by most writers about 70 to 80 A. D.⁵

Author
and Date
of Epistle
of Jude

Jude states that he has been moved by the dangers of the time to write those addressed “to contend earnestly for the faith . . . delivered unto the saints.” Ungodly men are “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.” Their sins are after the pattern of those of Cain, Balaam, and Korah. They even mingle in the love-feasts with impure purposes. Added to these, the apostles have said, “In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts. These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit.” The readers are urged to build themselves up in faith, prayer, and love, and to seek the rescue of others; and the brief letter ends with praise to God as able to guard the Christian from stumbling, and to set him “before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy.” (Jude, verses 1-25.)

Contents
of Epistle

⁴Davidson, 110.

⁵Bartlet, 350; Moffatt, 591, 592; Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter*, pp. clxv, cxlviii; *Hast. Bib. Dict.* II, 804, 805. Bigg places 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude in this order, near together, and written between 58 and 64 A. D.

"We did not follow cunningly devised fables," says Peter, "but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." This is the character that all Scripture bears on its face. It is the work of ingenuous men who have seen a great vision and come in contact with a great reality.

SECOND DAY. Memory Verse, 2 Peter 1:8.

Read 2 Peter 1:5-11. "In this list of the fruits of faith we have first the active gifts, virtue and knowledge; then the passive qualities of self-control and endurance; then the attitude toward God, godliness, toward the Church, love of the brethren, and finally toward God and all mankind, love" (2 Peter 1:5-7).⁶

SCRIPTURE SCHEME.

Second Peter: Salutation, 1:1, 2; Divine gifts calling for diligence, 3-11; Peter's witness-bearing confirmed by the transfiguration and inspired prophecy, 12-21; Evil men arraigned, 2; Mockers against Christ's coming refuted, 3:1-13; Steadfastness commended in the light of Paul's Epistles, 14-16; Conclusion, 17, 18.

Jude: Salutation, verses 1, 2; Reasons for writing, 3, 4; Examples of the doom of the wicked, 5-7; The sin of railing, 8-11; Evil men and mockers described, and arraigned through prophecy, 12-19; The Christian's duty, in contrast, 20-23; Benediction, 24, 25.

THIRD DAY. Memory Verse, 2 Peter 1:21.

Read 2 Peter 1:12-21. On the last verse the Cam. Bib. says: "The words assert in the fullest sense the inspiration of all true prophets."

MAP AND LESSON OUTLINE.

The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude show points of connection.

Their right order in time forms a difficult problem.

Evils arraigned, such as impurity, self-assertion, railing, wanton living, covetousness.

⁶N. C. B., 262.

Second Peter urges one grace of character to be added to another.

Coming of false teachers and mockers predicted.

The readers should grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

87, 47, 92-103, 85, 57. (*Map 20*). Possible course of messenger in conveying Second Epistle of Peter to Churches in Asia Minor (?winter-spring, ?66).

Tradition of Peter's death explaining the words, *quo vadis?*

106 (*Map 21*). Peter's course from the house of Prisca⁷ to site of Domine Quo Vadis chapel, if tradition is used (?autumn-winter, ?67).

107. Peter's course in turning back into the city and going to the Mamertin prison (?autumn-winter, ?67).

108. Peter's course from the Mamertin prison to the place of martyrdom (?autumn-winter, ?67).

Author and date of the Epistle of Jude.

The readers exhorted to contend earnestly for the faith delivered to the saints.

God is able to guard the Christian from stumbling, and to bring him to the heavenly goal in exceeding joy.

4, 22 (*Map 25*). Possible course of messenger in conveying the Epistle of Jude from Jerusalem to Christians in Syria⁸ (?70-80 A. D.).

Make an outline map of the ancient city of Rome (having only the walls of Servius Tullius), and locate the site of the house of Prisca, where Peter is thought to have stayed, that of the *quo vadis* scene, the Mamertin prison, and Nero's gardens, across the Tiber, where Peter's martyrdom is supposed to have occurred, and mark the course of Peter in accordance with the points of the tradition. (See Map 21, sections 106, 107, 108.)

FOURTH DAY. Memory Verse, 2 Peter 2:9.

Read 2 Peter 2. Note (verses 1, 3, 12) how fully the writer states that the punishment of sin is destruction.

⁷See Rom. 16: 3-5; Hast. Bib. Dict., IV, 310.

⁸See Sixth Day.

GENERAL REFERENCES.

Purves, secs. 275, 276, 291-295; Bartlet, 344-351, 518-521; Blaikie, 487-489; McClymont, 137-143; Stevens, 253-257, 312-324; Farrar (E. D.), 61-63, 114-157; Hast. Bib. Dict., arts. "Second Epistle of Peter," "Jude," "Epistle of Jude."



MAP 21. ROME, ANCIENT AND MODERN
Martyrdom of Paul and Peter

FIFTH DAY. Memory Verse, 2 Peter 3: 18.

Read 2 Peter 3. "The apostles are always named as coordinate with the Old Testament prophets, a like

authority is ascribed to them, and it can not surprise us if Peter should so early have recognized that their writings belonged to the same order as those of the prophets."⁹

TOPICS FOR PERSONAL INVESTIGATION AND FOR ASSIGNMENT
IN CLASS WORK.

1. The defenses against errors and corruptions threatening the Church. Acts 4: 10, 11; 6: 10; James 3: 17; 5: 19, 20; Acts 15: 6-10; 1 Thess. 5: 21; Gal. 2:14; 2 Cor. 13: 8; Acts 20: 29-32; Col. 2: 6, 7; Eph. 6: 17; 1 Tim. 4: 16; Titus 3: 10, 11; 2 Tim. 3: 13-17; Jude, verse 17; Heb. 13: 15; Rev. 3: 18; 1 John 2: 26, 27.
2. Casket of virtues and graces (2 Peter 1: 5-7). Cam. Bib., 166, 167; N. C. B., 261, 262.
3. Inspired prophecy (2 Peter 1: 21). Adeney, 152, 153; Exp. Bib., 277-279; Bib. Dict.
4. End of the present world-order and beginning of the new (2 Peter 3: 5-13). Exp. Bib., 335-362; Cam. Bib., 191-196.
5. Steps in the growth of the New Testament (2 Peter 3: 15, 16). Cam. Bib., 197, 198; Hast. Bib. Dict., art. "New Testament Canon."
6. Jude the brother of James. Farrar (E. D.), 143-149; Hast. Bib. Dict.

SIXTH DAY. Memory Verse, Jude, verse 3.

Read Jude, verses 1-16. Bartlet sees in the language and references of Jude a resemblance to the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, and thinks that this "tends to locate Jude's readers in Syria, to the north of Palestine. . . . Such would naturally be addressed on the subject of our common salvation by one revered outside of Palestine as well as within it."¹⁰

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS.

1. What special mark of connection is there between Second Peter and the Epistle of Jude?
2. What date may be given to Second Peter?

⁹Dods, 210.

¹⁰Bartlet, 347-350.

3. To whose Epistles does this letter refer at the close?
4. What are some of the evils arraigned in the two Epistles?
5. Within what years is the Epistle of Jude placed?
6. To whom was Jude related?

SEVENTH DAY. Memory Verses, Jude, verses 24, 25.

Read Jude, verses 17-25. Verses 17, 18, may refer to 2 Peter 3:3.¹¹ "The Epistle concludes with one of the most beautiful doxologies to be found in the New Testament."¹²

PERSONAL THOUGHT.

"Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." (Jude, verse 3.)

Every age calls for those who will earnestly contend for truth and right. Can sacred standards of belief, character, and conduct, can civic righteousness and genuine reforms count on my support?

¹¹Dods, 232, 233; Hast. Bib. Dict., II, 805.

¹²Jude, verses 24, 25. McClymont, 143.

STUDY VI

CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY AS THE GLORIOUS REALIZATION OF OLD TESTAMENT TYPES

SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS AND LEADERS.

TIME, 59-69 A. D.

PLACE, of writer, Cæsarea or Rome; of readers, Jerusalem or Palestine.

REFERENCES: McClymont, 116-122; Carr, 57-143; Mitchell, 1-26, 71-179.

KEY-WORD, Perfect Religion. The superior survives. Hebrews shows that by every test the religion of Christ is complete, finished, final, perfect. Its sacrifice for sin is complete, its priest, the Divine Son, completely enters into the life of man, and also is able completely to present his finished work in heaven,

The new view concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews and its author is that it originated in the Church at Cæsarea, about 59 A. D., when Paul was detained there as a prisoner. According to this point of view, the main author was Philip the Deacon, representing the Cæsarean Church, and Paul appended the last few verses, thus accounting for the persistent tradition that has connected him with the Epistle. The words near the close of the Epistle, "They of Italy salute you," may then mean that Italian Jewish Christian pilgrims who had been to Jerusalem were at Cæsarea before embarking on their way home, and thus voiced their greetings to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem who had been their hosts, to whom the Epistle was sent. This solution of the problems of the Epistle is to be weighed over against the view given below. It has commended itself to Prof. Ramsay, who has worked out features that make it much more complete, and it seems very illuminating.

MOTTO: "The whole tenor of the writer's argument is designed to prove that what the readers think they have in Judaism they have in a perfect form in Christianity."

FIRST DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 1:4.

Read Heb. 1.

**Paul not
the Author
of Hebrews** NARRATIVE.—Although Paul was counted for centuries the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he is no longer so counted. The scholars of to-day are not able to fix upon the author of this Epistle, but, "Whatever differences of opinion may exist as to who the author really was, the belief that he was Paul is practically abandoned."¹

**Hebrews
Distinct
from
Paul's
Writings** Why has there been such a change of view? Because the body of Christian thinkers have been led to see that the Epistle is a fresh putting of Christianity. It is a remarkable and masterful composition, treating the Christian system in such a comprehensive way that it takes its place beside the synoptic Gospels, the Pauline Epistles, or the writings of John. It is in complete harmony with the mode in which Paul puts Christianity, but it is different, and the wonder is that this fact was not discovered earlier. As to its style, every sentence is carefully finished, every period exactly balanced, while Paul is notable for digressions, and variations from a regular order. Hebrews is calm, Paul intense; he has passed through a great religious crisis, the author of Hebrews has not. The latter has derived his Christian knowledge from disciples of the Lord; Paul from Christ himself. With Paul the Law is moral requirement, convicting of sin, but powerless to give the soul deliverance; with the writer of Hebrews, Law is the priestly and temple ritual, typical of Christianity, a lower gospel leading the worshiper onward into its antitype, the final and perfect religion. Paul sees the risen Christ, and the believer created anew "in him;" the author of Hebrews

¹George Milligan, 15. See also Purves, sec. 272; N. C. B., 28-33; Hast. Bib. Dict., II, 335.

sees the ascended Christ, and the disciple coming to him as high priest, or following his example, as Son of the Father and "forerunner" into the heavenly sanctuary.

Of those who have been suggested as the author of the Epistle, Barnabas was named by Tertullian, and is favored by a strong list of modern writers, as is also Apollos, prominently brought forward by Luther. A recent and surprising theory is that by Harnack, who suggests that the letter may have come from Priscilla and Aquila, the former being the actual writer. This accounts for the suppression of the name. Professor A. S. Peake remarks: "While it cannot be said that Harnack has proved his point, his identification seems to be the most probable that has yet been proposed."² But Professor Bruce concludes: "We must be content to remain in ignorance as to the writer of this remarkable work. . . . Was it not meet that he who tells us at the outset that God's last great word to men was spoken by his Son should disappear like a star in the presence of the great luminary of day?"

The question of the Church or community to which the Epistle was addressed is perhaps as difficult to determine as that of its author. Milligan favors the view that it was destined for the Jewish Church in Rome, which had originated from those who heard the gospel at Pentecost, and had remained distinct from the larger Roman Church to which Paul wrote. The time, according to this writer, was 63 or 64 A. D., shortly before the persecution by Nero.³ But the more common opinion would reverse the situation, and have the Epistle sent from Italy to Hebrew Christians in the coast regions of Palestine or Syria.⁴ And in this case the probable date would be from 65 to 69 A. D., though some would place it after the destruction of Jerusalem, from 70 to 80 A. D.

²N. C. B., 38.

³Milligan, 45-51; N. C. B., 25-28.

⁴Barlett, 280-282; Purves, 286; Bruce, *Hast. Bib. Dict.*, II, 337; *Hort., Judaistic Christianity*, 156.

Suggestions
as to
Author

Community
Addressed
and Date

Contents The contents of the Epistle will be summarized in connection with the constructive readings.

Dr. Westcott was accustomed to say that the Epistle to the Hebrews was one of the two books of the Bible that had the most specific message for the difficulties of our own day.

SECOND DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 2:3.

Read Heb. 2. Note that the main theme of the Epistle is that the Christian religion is perfect and final, as a covenant relation established by God with man through his Son. In his opening words the writer strikes the keynote of all that follows in a contrast between the prophets and the Son through whom God has now spoken. The first comparison is between the Son and angels, to whom he is superior both in himself and in the glory to which he has been raised through humiliation in becoming man.

SCRIPTURE SCHEME.

Hebrews: Theme, The finality of the Christian religion as mediated in God's Son, Heb. 1:1-4; The Son superior to angels, 1:5-2; Also superior to Moses, 3:1-6; Practical exhortation, 3:7-4:13; The Son's glory as High Priest, introduced by exhortation, 4:14-16; His qualifications for priesthood, 5:1-10; Renewed exhortation preparing for main truth, 5:11-6; The Son an absolute High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, 7.

(Outline concluded in Study VII, Second Day.)

THIRD DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 3:3.

Read Heb. 3. After a short practical appeal to the Hebrew Christians not to neglect "so great salvation," the writer next shows that Christ is superior to Moses, and by another appeal points the readers to the true Sabbath rest.

MAP AND LESSON OUTLINE.

The New Testament writers represent different modes of thought, as that of James, Peter, Paul.

It is now clear that Paul did not write the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Contrasted qualities of Hebrews shows it is not Pauline.

Among the possible authors, Barnabas, Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila, and Philip have been named by notable thinkers.

The community to which the Epistle was sent was probably Syrian or Palestinian.

71, 72, 109. Course of messenger conveying the Epistle from Rome to Tyre, for Syrian or Palestinian Christians (?65-69 A. D.).



MAP 22. ROME TO SYRIA AND PALESTINE
Epistle to the Hebrews

Make a map extending from Rome or Italy to Syria and Palestine and mark the course of messenger conveying the Epistle to the Hebrews. (See Map 22.) If the new view is accepted that it was written by Philip the Deacon at Cæsarea and sent to Jerusalem, the class artist can use Map 3 on page 40, and mark route through Antipatris, northeast of Joppa, but not in map.

FOURTH DAY. Memory Verses, Heb. 4:9, 15.

Read Heb. 4. The exhortation respecting the true Sabbath rest is concluded, and that is added relating to Christ as our High Priest.

GENERAL REFERENCES.

Purves, secs. 172, 272, 273; Bartlet, 277-289; McClymont, 116-122; Stevens, 483-522; Farrar (E. D.), 60, 61, 158-305; George Milligan, 3-170; Hast. Bib. Dict., art. "Epistle to Hebrews."

FIFTH DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 5:8.

Read Heb. 5. The writer now gives the qualifications of all high priesthood, and shows that they are fulfilled in Christ, who has "learned obedience by the things which he suffered." He then seeks to bring the hearers of his message to the stage where they can receive the "solid food" of doctrine.

TOPICS FOR PERSONAL INVESTIGATION AND FOR ASSIGNMENT
IN CLASS WORK.

1. The heavenly calling and character of the Church, Acts 2: 33; 1 Thess. 1: 10; 2 Thess. 2: 14; 1 Cor. 13: 12; Rom. 8: 18; Col. 3: 1-4; Eph. 2: 6, 7; Phil. 3: 14, 20, 21; 2. Tim. 4: 8, 18; 1 Peter 1: 4; Jude, verse 24; 2 Peter 1: 10, 11; Heb. 3: 1; 12: 22, 23; Rev. 21: 9, 27; 1 John 3: 2, 3.

2. Alexandria, its life and thought. Farrar (E. D.), 158-185; Hast. Bib. Dict.

3. The Levitical system. Hast. Bib. Dict., arts. "Priests and Levites," "Priest in New Testament."

4. Melchizedek. N. C. B., 152-159; Bib. Dict.

5. The doctrine of final or eternal judgment (Heb. 6: 2). N. C. B., 142; Milligan, 38.

6. Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Milligan, 3-33; Farrar (E. D.), 185-222, 689-697.

SIXTH DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 6: 18.

Read Heb. 6. The appeal, continued in this chapter, is that the Hebrew Christians pass out of the "first prin-

ciples of Christ, and press on unto perfection." To those who revert to the old life the author holds out no hope of renewed repentance, since they "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." But he is "persuaded better things" of his readers, and desires that they be active and persevering, since God makes sure, even by oath, their hope, which enters into that within the veil, whither as a forerunner Jesus has entered, "having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS.

1. Give the names of writers of Epistles already reviewed, representing a conception of Christianity distinct from that of the Epistle to the Hebrews.
2. Why is the Epistle to the Hebrews no longer assigned to Paul? See Narrative.
3. Give some points of contrast between this Epistle and Paul's writings. See Narrative.
4. Mention five persons who have been thought of as author of Hebrews.
5. To whom is Christ the Son shown in this Epistle to be superior?

SEVENTH DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 7:25.

Read Heb. 7. The character and greatness of the priest king, Melchizedek, and the need of a priesthood of a higher order than the Levitical are presented, and it is shown that Christ meets all the conditions. "For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."

PERSONAL THOUGHT.

"Let us, therefore, draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace." (Heb. 4:6.)

Those who have the most abundant privileges often make the least use of them.

With what jealous interest would the high priest prize his right to enter once a year, with trembling, into the dread silence and darkness behind the veil. And do I, who can come at any moment, "with boldness, unto the throne of grace," make such use as I ought and as I need of my great right?

STUDY VII

THE LIFE OF CHRIST AND THE FOUNDING OF THE EARLY CHURCH GIVEN HISTORIC, WRITTEN FORM

SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS AND LEADERS.

TIME, of writing of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, about 60-82 A. D. (Earlier proposed period, about 40-62 A. D.)

PLACES, from Palestine through Antioch, Philippi, to Rome, the probable line of places. (See Map 23, page 74.)

REFERENCES: McClymont, 5-46; Holdsworth, entire; Hayes, entire; Watson, vii-xxiii.

KEY-WORD, Book Religion. The Bible enables Christianity, if perverted, to renew and restore itself. The Gospels and the Acts are at the center of the sacred writings which have this correcting power, and which serve for the extension of the knowledge of Christ among all nations.

"Matthew gives us the marvelous words of Jesus. Mark records the marvelous works of Jesus. Luke reveals the secret depths of his human heart. John reveals the secret heights of his divine communion and life. Matthew pictures the king, Mark the servant, Luke the brother-man, and John the eternal Lord."¹

"The Apostles come in as the indispensable teachers of the young community. They had been with the Lord, and they were commanded by him to baptize all nations, and to teach them what he commanded. . . . The teaching which is now embodied in the New Testament could then be derived only from their lips."²

¹Hayes, pp. 85, 86.

²R. F. Horton, *The Early Church* (1909), pp. 32, 33. Century Bible Handbooks. Price, 40 cents net.

MOTTO: "There is no incongruity between the picture drawn by one evangelist and the picture drawn by another. It is one Lord Jesus Christ who is the heart of the Gospels."³

FIRST DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 8:2.

Read Heb. 8:1-5.

Oral Gospels NARRATIVE.—It is not easy for most readers to realize that until about the date now reached none of the written Gospels had appeared. Placed first in the New Testament, they are almost unconsciously thought of as being first in time. But oral Gospels, in the form of apostolic sermons or accounts of Christ's words and deeds, death and resurrection, were used from the beginning, and by repetition would tend to assume fixity of outline. This body of narrative, in nearly the words first employed by the apostles as the original witnesses, would be repeated from one worker to another throughout the Churches. But in time the need would become apparent of reducing these current narratives to permanent, written form.

Synoptic Gospels Thus arose our first three Gospels⁴ which seem to have been accepted almost at once as having apostolic authority. The course of events in these three Gospels is almost exactly the same, from the ministry of John the Baptist, with which Mark opens, onward, so they are called Synoptic Gospels. The Gospel of John is distinct, and will be considered later with his other writings.

Gospel of Mark Of the Synoptic Gospels, Mark is now regarded as having been written first, and probably at Rome, shortly after Peter's death. It contains, in large degree, the substance of Peter's narrative of Christ's life in his sermons, as heard and remembered by John Mark. It is the Gospel of Deeds, graphic and chronological, and supplies the basis

³Holdsworth, p. 208.

⁴Only the simplest historical setting and characterization of the several Gospels are given in this book. See statement at close of Narrative.

of events common to the Synoptic Gospels. It may safely be dated in the years 65-70 A. D.⁵

If it was given to Peter, through Mark, to leave to the Church for all time the simple, vivid, original Gospel of action, it was granted to Matthew to produce what has been termed "the most important book that has ever been written," the Gospel of our Lord's kingly majesty, great public discourses, and fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Its immense value arises from the fact that it appears to reproduce most directly Christ's main doctrinal sayings or discourses, the *logia*. These may have been written by Matthew in Aramaic, thus accounting for the early tradition that his Gospel was written in Hebrew, which is not proven. This Gospel in Greek was probably written in Galilee or Syria in the years from 67 to 75 A. D., with its immediate aim, like that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, to confirm the wavering faith of Jewish Christians.⁶

If Mark wrote the *realistic* Gospel and Matthew the *Messianic*, Luke composed what may be called the *catholic* Gospel, "the most beautiful book that has ever been written." Matthew is suggestive of the past and the Jews; Mark, of the present and the Romans; Luke, of the future and the race. It bears the impress of a historian, a man of literary and artistic temperament, a soul radiant with universal sympathy, in communion with Pauline ideals. Rome, Cæsarea, and Antioch have been thought of as favorable places for its preparation. Says Adeney, "St. Luke's connection with Philippi suggests that city."⁷ Its date ranges from 70 A. D. to 80 A. D.⁸

⁵Bartlet, 364-369; Purves, sec. 278; McClymont, 21-26; Hast. Bib. Dict., III, 248-262.

⁶Bartlet, 353-363, 369-371; Purves, sec. 277; Hast. Bib. Dict., III, 296-305.

⁷Biblical Introduction, 310.

⁸Bartlet, 409-417; Purves, sec. 279; Moffatt, 271-274; N. C. B., 3-23; Hast. Bib. Dict., 162-173.

The Acts of the Apostles From Luke came the two longest writings of the New Testament. His Gospel is the most extended, and next to it is the Acts of the Apostles. The latter is also one of the first in importance. It is the chief authority, either within or without the Bible, for the founding of the Church and its early growth. "The first thirty years of Church life was a vast subject to take in hand, but Luke understood the true principle of dealing with it." He gathers the record around personalities—first, Peter, and, second, Paul—who are "represented as a pair of athletes wrestling on behalf of the Church." Altogether there are one hundred and ten persons named in its pages, and how distinctly each appears! Then how perfectly the entire record is welded together into one whole! "Without any jar or break from the small beginnings at Jerusalem we are led on, step by step, with increasing interest and enthusiasm, to the great climax of Paul at Rome."⁹ If we ask for Luke's immediate motive in both writings, it may be that, in a time of growing persecution by the empire, he would exhibit the full spirit of Christianity, and show how, in earlier and happier years, at all points of trial, the State pronounced in its favor. The date of the Acts is probably between 72 and 82 A. D.¹⁰

Historical Place, Not Full Treatment The production and historical place of the above-named writings are here given. The full treatment of the characteristics, relationships, and contents of the several Gospels can be found in some of the most recent small manuals noted among the Books for Reference in the Introduction, such as those of Holdsworth, Hayes, and Barth.

Above all, do not neglect the memory verses. The great words of Scripture, if once firmly fixed in the mind, will follow our ship like sea gulls through all the stormy passage of life.

⁹Rackham, xlii-xlvii.

¹⁰Ramsay (St. P.), 1-28, 304-312, 386-389; Rackham, Introduction; N. C. B., 3-30; Hast. Bib. Dict., I, 26-35.

SECOND DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 8: 11.

Read Heb. 8. The author indicates in this chapter the general condition under which Christ exercises his high-priestly ministry, as they fix the nature of the new covenant, which is finely pictured by a great passage from Jeremiah.¹¹

SCRIPTURE SCHEME.

General conditions of Christ's high-priestly ministry, Heb. 8; Five points of contrast with the Levitical system, 9—10: 18; Exhortation to draw near and remain true, 10: 19-39; Faith and its heroes, 11; God's discipline through suffering, 12: 1-13; Purity of the Church, 14-17; Two dispensations compared, 18-29; Practical duties, and closing requests, greetings, and benedictions, 13.

(Concluded from Study VI, Second Day.)

THIRD DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 9: 14.

Read Heb. 9. There are now given five points of contrast: First, as to the place of ministry, instead of the earthly tabernacle, Christ ministers in the heavenly; second, as to the offering, instead of animal life, it is his own life offered continuously, in his eternal spiritual estate; third, as to the power and effect of this offering, instead of only ceremonial cleanness, Christ's work produces a real cleansing of the conscience, and hallowing of the new covenant; fourth, as to the frequency of the offering, instead of being "year by year," it is "once" and forever. (See Fourth Day.)

MAP AND LESSON OUTLINE.

Until about the date now reached, none of the written Gospels had appeared.

Oral Gospels were doubtless in use from the beginning of the Early Church era.

The passing away of some of the leading apostles and the appearance of Paul's Epistles led to writing the Gospels.

The Gospel of Mark was probably written first, giving the original account of Christ's deeds.

¹¹Jer. 31: 31-34.

110. Locate on a map the origin of Gospel of Mark at Rome (65-70 A. D.).

The Gospel of Matthew is perhaps the most important as containing the *logia* or sayings of Christ.

111. Locate the probable origin of the Gospel of Matthew in Syria (67-75 A. D.).

The Gospel of Luke is regarded as the most beautiful and catholic in form and spirit.

112. Locate the possible origin of the Gospel of Luke at Philippi (70-80 A. D.).

The Acts of the Apostles is most valuable, as giving the founding and early growth of the Church.

113. Locate the possible origin of the Acts of the Apostles at Rome (72-82 A. D.).



MAP 23. ROME TO SYRIA

Production of the Gospels and the Acts

Make a map extending from Rome eastward to Palestine, and locate as clearly as possible the places of origin of the Synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. (See Map 23.)

FOURTH DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 10:14.

Read Heb. 10. A fifth point of contrast is the finality of Christ's offering in its power to cleanse, consecrate, and perfect the believer, who is, therefore, to draw near in an attitude of faith, hope, and love, as partaking in high-

priesthood. The readers are warned of judgment upon apostasy, and encouraged to patient endurance.

GENERAL REFERENCES.

Purves, secs. 1-6, 277-280, 301-304; Bartlet, 168-172, 352-371, 409-417, 509-511; McClymont, 1-46; Stevens, 1-7, 247-249; George Milligan, entire; Hast. Bib. Dict., arts. "Gospels," "Acts of the Apostles."

FIFTH DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 11:6.

Read Heb. 11. There is now given a statement of the meaning of faith, and a roll of its Old Testament exemplars.

TOPICS FOR PERSONAL INVESTIGATION AND FOR ASSIGNMENT IN CLASS WORK.

1. The earthly history of the Church. Acts 1: 1-8; 2: 1-4; 8: 4, 5; 9: 15; 10: 44; 11: 26; 13: 1-3; 15: 30, 31, 39, 40; 18: 23; 19: 1, 10; 22: 11; 28: 16, 30, 31; 2 Tim. 4: 6; 2 Peter 1: 13, 14; Rev. 1: 1; 1 John 5: 20.

2. How and when the Synoptic Gospels were produced. See References in Narrative.

3. The historical accuracy and purpose of Acts. References in Narrative; Bartlet, 168-172; Stevens, 249.

4. Jewish war and fall of Jerusalem. Farrar (E. D.), 476-488, 557-563; Bartlet, 260-276; Bib. Dict.

5. Furniture of the Tabernacle (Heb. 9: 2-5). Farrar (E. D.), 265-270; Bib. Dict.

6. High-priestly service on the Day of Atonement (Heb. 9: 7). Farrar (E. D.), 276-278, 701-705; George Milligan, 162-165.

7. Christ's perfect high-priestly ministry (Heb. 8—10: 18). George Milligan, 134-161; Stevens, 506-514.

8. Heroes of faith (Heb. 11). Farrar (E. D.), 288-294; Stevens, 515-519.

9. Chastisement (Heb. 12: 5-11). N. C. B., 227-229.

10. Two covenants or dispensations (Heb. 8: 6-13; 12: 18-29). George Milligan, 171-191; Stevens, 490-497.

11. Sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13: 15). N. C. B., 243; George Milligan, 180, 181.

SIXTH DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 12:1.

Read Heb. 12. The Christian is running a race. Suffering or chastening is shown to be a token of sonship. After a caution not to fall short of the grace of God, nor despise the birthright, Sinai and Zion are pictured. God's call is not to be refused.

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS.

1. How did oral Gospels arise? See Narrative.
2. What New Testament writings were probably produced before written Gospels? See Narrative.
3. Within about what dates did the Synoptic Gospels appear? See Narrative.
4. Give three points concerning each of these Gospels. See Narrative.
5. What is the date of Acts, and perhaps Luke's immediate motive in his two writings? See Narrative.
6. Mention five topics in Heb. 8—13.

SEVENTH DAY. Memory Verse, Heb. 13:15.

Read Heb. 13. The readers are urged to practice brotherly love, hospitality, care for the persecuted, purity, contentment, and freedom from avarice; to be responsive to right teachers and teaching, and to offer the sacrifice of praise and helpful deeds. The Epistle then closes with prayerful requests, salutations, and benedictions.

PERSONAL THOUGHT.

"A sacrifice of praise to God continually . . . the fruit of lips which make confession to his name." (Heb. 13:15.)

Do I constantly praise God in my testimony?

Praise for blessings received is the best way of approach to more.

STUDY VIII

THE SEER ON PATMOS—WARFARE OF GOOD AND EVIL—THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM AND AN ETERNAL SONG

SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS AND LEADERS.

TIME, 77 A. D.

PLACE, of writer, Patmos and Ephesus; of readers, the seven Churches of the Province of Asia.

REFERENCES: McClymont, 150-155; Walpole, entire; Alexander Ramsay, 1-27, 48-242.

KEY-WORD, Victory. Apocalyptic writings, of which the Book of Revelation is one, are for the heartening and inspiring of the Church amid conflict, showing that ultimate victory is sure for Jesus and his hosts. Some of the evils facing the Church are poverty, ignorance, greed, cruelty, profanity, intemperance, gambling, impurity.

"The Apocalypse discloses the heavenly life of our Lord, as the Gospels paint his life in Galilee and Jerusalem. In the Gospels he is seen teaching and working in his mortal flesh; in the Apocalypse he belongs to another and a higher order. But the ascended life is a continuation of the life in the flesh; the Person is *the same yesterday and to-day*, in Palestine and in Heaven."¹

MOTTO: "The value of the book lies in its power to comfort, sustain, and inspire burdened, sorrowing, and oppressed souls of every age."²

¹H. B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (1906), p. vii. Price, \$3.75 net.

²W. C. Barclay, in *The Worker and His Bible* (1909), p. 235. Price, 50 cents net.

FIRST DAY. Memory Verse, Rev. 1:3.

Read Rev. 1.

Three Apostolic Leaders NARRATIVE.—Two apostles, Peter and Paul, both by their actions and writings, up to the point now reached, did most to give direction to early Church history. A third, the Apostle John, fills out the first century, and completes the period covered by the First Apostles.

Book of Revelation The present view of scholars very generally places the Book of Revelation first among the Johannine writings, and holds that it was produced at Ephesus between 67 and 85 A. D. It is not possible to determine the exact time when it was written. Most agree that it was after John left Patmos, for he says, Rev. 1:9, "I was in the isle." The most probable date is in the reign of Vespasian, and about 77 A. D. The statement (Rev. 1:9) that the writer "was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus," is rightly understood as meaning John's banishment to the island because of his preaching,³ and has variously been placed in the reigns of Nero, Vespasian, and Domitian. The book partakes of the nature of both a prophetic and an apocalyptic work, the messages to the seven Churches being in the mode of the former, and the remainder of the book in that of the latter; for prophecy sought chiefly to lead God's people to repentance by warning them of judgments, while apocalypses were designed to encourage them under tribulation by showing that judgments were approaching their enemies. The last named is the main service of this most peculiar New Testament book. It is the Apocalypse or Revelation "of Jesus Christ." This is the notable and impressive feature of the book. From beginning to end Christ is divine, supreme, all-conquering. His redemptive work is also exalted. Note how it begins to find expression in this chapter 1:5, 7, 18.⁴ It was a time of great trial to the

³N. C. B., 130; *Hast. Bib. Dict.*, IV, 259. ⁴See also 5:6; 7:14; 13:8.

Christian communities in the province of Asia and probably almost everywhere throughout the empire. The example of Nero's savage treatment of Christians at Rome would inspire a policy of attack upon them, and in many places Jewish hatred of the new sect would now find the officers of the State responsive to their vengeful purposes. It is evident that already at Smyrna and Philadelphia the Churches had suffered much from this source, and at Pergamum Antipas and probably others had died "for the testimony of Jesus." At the same time the internal condition of the Churches called for searching admonition and rebuke. Worldliness was rife, subtle heresies were sapping the vigor of faith, and false leaders poisoning the springs of morals, so that some were "lukewarm" and others "dead" to the influences of a true and holy gospel. For all these conditions, the words of John in the letters to the seven Churches of the province of Asia bring a searching and helpful message. (Rev. 1—3.)

The central portion of John's Apocalypse, or chapters 4—20, forms a vast panorama of visions and symbols, from which one clear fact emerges—it is a picture or representation of conflict between good and evil. Let the reader or student fix upon this fact as the key to the chief message of this portion of the book, and whatever else may be obscure, his effort to grasp the meaning of that which is written will not be fruitless; for the issue of this conflict is the supreme triumph of good.

This part of the Apocalypse has a terrible and sanguinary background of history, dark with wickedness and crime, and deeply stained with blood, during the later years of Nero's reign, the Jewish revolt against Rome, and the destruction of Jerusalem. The peace and security of to-day make it impossible to conceive of such scenes of violence and misery as almost filled the world at that time. Farrar says concerning the Apocalypse: "We must read

Central
Fact

Historical
Background

it by the lurid light of the bale-fires of martyrdom. We must try to feel as Christians felt when they saw their brethren torn by the wild beasts of the amphitheater, or standing as living torches, each in his pitchy tunic, on one ghastly night at Rome. . . . It shows us the struggle of good and evil, of light and darkness. There is God and Satan; there is the Harlot City and the New Jerusalem; there is Michael and the Dragon; there is heaven and the abyss; there are the armies of the saints and the armies of the idolaters."⁵

Message Concealed The very form and mode of expression of the Apocalypse may spring in part from the necessity of concealing its message from the officers and spies of the government. John wrote in parable and symbol that reading they might not understand. And so it happens that later generations have not understood, and even now to the mass of Christians the Revelation is a sealed book. It doubtless brought wondrous cheer to Christ's flock then, and it still has the same comfort for all who go beyond its figurative language and find its underlying truth.

Principles Given, Not Distant Events "The object of the book is to nerve the trembling faith of the Asian Churches in the first place, and through these the whole Church, to face the strain of the present, and the probable agony of the immediate future."⁶ "Hardly any book in the New Testament is so relative to the age that saw its birth, and less looks toward or is adapted to the distant future."⁷ "It is a representation in which an idea, not the time needed for the expression of the idea, plays the chief part. While the Apocalypse embraces the whole period of the Christian dispensation, it sets before us within this period the action of great principles and not special incidents. In this respect it follows closely the lines of our Lord's last discourse in the three earlier Gos-

⁵Farrar (M. B.), 518, 519.
⁷Bartlet, 406.
⁶C. Anderson Scott, N. C. B., 64, 65.

pels.”⁸ In its opening sentences the book itself declares that “the time is at hand” and that through this revelation God enables John to show “the things which must shortly come to pass.”

The feature of the Apocalypse of John, which gives it power to comfort and inspire, is that it glorifies Christ, and declares that he shall be finally and forever victorious over all evil.

Christ
Victorious
Over Evil

Conflict is the inevitable experience of the Church, and of every genuine Christian, in this age as really as it was in the first century. Truth can never be at peace with error, holiness with sin, Christ with Satan. The Apocalypse discloses the great principle of the cross for every disciple. If John’s Gospel is the manifestation of Christ’s martyrdom, the Apocalypse is the revelation of the martyrdom of his followers. The writer “knew no Christianity that does not, in one way or another, conduct the believer through tears and blood, through suffering and the cross, to the heavenly reward.”⁹

The
Cross and
Martyrdom

But, if the Christian has conflict, he has also divine preservation in the midst of strife, and shares in the triumph and dominion of his Lord. This, therefore, may explain the difficulty connected with the “resurrections” of Rev. 20. John views all believers as martyrs; for if not among those “beheaded,” they are such as “worshiped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand” (verse 4). Both the statement that they “lived” and that they “reigned with Christ a thousand years” appear to be symbolic expressions of their triumph, the same as the first clause of the verse, “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.” The “second resurrection,” so called, of verses 12, 13, and the resurrection of the unrighteous,¹⁰ are also symbolic, but neither the first

Conflict,
Preservation,
Triumph

⁸William Milligan, 153.

⁹William Milligan, 169.

¹⁰Terry, 450-453; William Milligan, 227.

nor the second of these apocalyptic resurrections chronicles the actual final resurrection. They point to the fact of final resurrection, but do not give the form. They reveal the certain triumph of the righteous and overthrow of wicked men and evil powers.

A Redeemed
Society and
Fellowship
of Praise

In like manner John's vision of "the bride, the wife of the Lamb . . . the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,"¹¹ may be the conclusions of a message too great to be compressed into any language of earth; but they are eloquent of a glorious reality that is here and now, as well as in the future, an eternal city and song, a redeemed society and fellowship of praise, in Christ and unto Christ, for evermore.

The
Lord
of Life

"It is this which gives the Apocalypse its place at the close and climax of the New Testament; this which gives it its place in the heart of Christ's disciples. It describes, as no other book does, the glory of our ascended Lord, and the triumphant issue of his conflict with evil; the pictures which it draws of heaven and those who dwell there, of the new life where 'there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain,' commend themselves to the Christian heart, not alone for their intrinsic beauty, but because Christ is so plainly set forth as the Lord of that life, and his sacrifice as the way by which men attain unto it."¹²

To the modern reader it is far more important to get the general impression of the Book of Revelation than the specific interpretation of the various symbolical representations. It has an intensely practical purpose, and illustrates a well-nigh universal characteristic of Biblical prophecy. The prophets are all pessimists as to present conditions, but invincible optimists as to the final outcome.

¹¹Rev. 21: 9, 10.

¹²N. C. B. 74.

SECOND DAY. Memory Verse, Rev. 3: 20.

Read Rev. 2: 1-11; 3: 14-22. The first message or letter is to the Church at Ephesus, the chief city of the province, where St. John resided (2: 1-7). Smyrna alone of the seven cities flourishes to-day. Its Church was wholly commended¹³ (2: 8-10). Laodicea (3: 14-22) was a small city until after the Roman period had begun; then it rapidly became great and rich. Destroyed by an earthquake in A. D. 60, it disdained on account of its wealth to seek help from the emperor in rebuilding, as many of the greatest cities of Asia had done. Its main trade was in garments made from the beautiful glossy black wool of its sheep. A remedy called "Phrygian Powder," for weakness of eyes, was probably prepared here. Mark the allusions in verses 17, 18. The messages to the seven Churches were designed to be representative and complete for the Church in general through all time.¹⁴ "Throughout the messages to the seven cities it is evident that the writer knew the circumstances of each city, and alluded to many facts of its present or past life."¹⁵

SCRIPTURE SCHEME.

Superscription, Rev. 1: 1-3; Salutation, 4-8; The Seer, 9, 10; The Son of man, 11-16; Commission to write, 17-20; To Ephesus, 2: 1-7; To Smyrna, 8-11; To Pergamum, 12-17; To Thyatira, 18-29; To Sardis, 3: 1-6; To Philadelphia, 7-13; To Laodicea, 14-22; Glory and worship in heaven: The Creator, the Redeemer, 4, 5; Six seals, 6; First interlude: The numbered and the blessed, 7; Coming forth of the trumpets out of the seventh seal, 8: 1-6; Six trumpets, 8: 7-9; Second interlude: Little book, temple, two witnesses, 10-11: 14; Seventh trumpet, 11: 15-19; Messiah's kingdom and its foes, 12-14; Preparation for the bowls, 15-16: 1; Seven bowls, 16: 2-21; Mystic Babylon and her fall, 17-18; Triumphant chorus, 19: 1-8; Angel's words to John, 9, 10; First stage of

¹³Ramsay (Letters), 268.¹⁴Terry, 314.¹⁵Ramsay (Letters); *Hast. Bib. Dict.*, IV, 555.

Christ's final triumph over evil, 19: 11—20: 3; The martyr-righteous early and completely share in Christ's triumph, 20: 4-6; Second stage of Christ's final triumph over evil, and doom of unrighteous, 7-15; The Holy City from afar, 21: 1-8; The same more fully described, 21: 9—22: 5; Conclusion, 22: 6-21.

THIRD DAY. Memory Verse, Rev. 5: 9.

Read Rev. 4: 11—5: 10. As chapters 2 and 3 give the situation of the Church on earth, so chapters 4 and 5 present the situation in heaven; in which the center of praise and worship is God as Creator, and then as Redeemer, in the Lamb, who is able to open the sealed book.

MAP AND LESSON OUTLINE.

The three apostolic leaders, Peter, Paul, and John, fill out the first century.

114, 115. *John's course from Ephesus to the island of Patmos and return to Ephesus (967-75 A. D.).*

The Book of Revelation placed first in date among the Johannine writings.

It was probably produced after John had left Patmos. It partakes of the nature of both a prophetic and an apocalyptic work.

It exalts Christ and shows that he is divine and all-conquering.

The Churches of the province of Asia were passing through deep trials.

They were assailed both by persecution and by heresy and worldliness.

To them the Letters of the Apocalypse bring a searching and helpful message.

The central portion of the Apocalypse is a panorama of the conflict between good and evil.

Its background was the wicked and bloody reign of Nero. Its object was to nerve the trembling faith of the Christians and cause them to stand firm.

It does this by showing that while there is conflict, there is preservation and triumph.

Its vision of the New Jerusalem suggests a redeemed society and fellowship of praise.

100, 116, 84. Course of messenger conveying the Apocalypse from Ephesus to the other six Churches of the province of Asia and returning to Ephesus (777 A. D.).

Make a map of the province of Asia, in western Asia Minor, and the Island of Patmos. Mark the course of the Apostle John from Ephesus to Patmos and return to Ephesus. Also mark the course of a messenger in conveying the Apocalypse with its messages to the seven Churches named, by going from Ephesus, the first one, to each of the others in their order, and returning to Ephesus from Laodicea, the last one. (See Map 24, sections 114, 115, and sections 100, 116, 84.)



MAP 24. ASIAN CITIES AND PATMOS
Journeys of the Apocalypse

FOURTH DAY. Memory Verse, Rev. 7:14.

Read Rev. 7:9—8:6. With chapter 6 the action of the book begins, and Christ opens six seals. In the first

part of chapter 7, which forms an interlude, the saved compose a definite number, are sealed "on their foreheads," and assigned to the twelve tribes of Israel; in the latter part the unnumbered multitude of the saved are disclosed in perfect purity and joy. The one section may suggest Old Testament limitation, the other the unbounded fullness of gospel salvation. Chapter 8 notes the solemn hush of heaven at the opening of the seventh seal, which completes one series, by developing another of seven trumpets.

GENERAL REFERENCES.

Purves, secs. 313, 314, 318-320; Bartlet, 388-408; Blaikie, 489-492; McClymont, 153-155; Ramsay (Letters), entire; Stevens, 523-563; Farrar (E. D.), 416-453, 464-566; William Milligan, 1-160, 163-176, 193-233; Benham, 49-52; Hast. Bib. Dict., II, 680-683, 690, 691; IV, 239-266.

FIFTH DAY. Memory Verse, Rev. 12: 11.

Read Rev. 12. Dr. M. S. Terry¹⁶ divides the Apocalypse into two parts, of which the first is the Revelation of the Lamb, 1—11, and the second the Revelation of the Bride, 12—22, and indicates that the second half of the book is a new cycle similar to the first half. Others would make the different series, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls, like a spiral, each additional circle rising higher, and each approaching the same goal.¹⁷ The "woman" (verse 1) is the symbol of God's true people; the child, of Christ, and perhaps of the infant Christian Church; the dragon, of the devil.

TOPICS FOR PERSONAL INVESTIGATION AND FOR ASSIGNMENT IN CLASS WORK.

1. The conflict and triumph of the Church. Acts 4: 1-4, 13, 21; 9: 13-15, 31; 12: 1-3, 11, 21-24; 13: 8-12; 1 Thess. 1: 6-8; 2 Thess. 2: 8, 9; Acts 19: 13-20; 1 Cor. 15: 5-7; Rom. 8: 35-37;

¹⁶Terry, *Biblical Apocalypics*, 271-274, 381.

¹⁷N. C. B., 69, 70; William Milligan, 95-101.

Eph. 6: 10-13; 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8; 1 Peter 5: 8-10; Heb. 11: 32-34; Rev. 7: 9; 12: 11; 17: 14.

2. Nero and his reign. Farrar (E. D.), 11-52, 470-473, 528-543; Bib. Dict.

3. Vespasian. Bartlet, 399; Bib. Dict.

4. Patmos. Hurlbut, 133, 134; Bib. Dict.

5. Apocalyptic literature. Bartlet, 388-391; William Milligan, 1-35; N. C. B., 25-34; Bib. Dict.

6. The figures and language of the Apocalypse as found in the Old Testament. William Milligan, 71-77; Bartlet, 391.

7. Smyrna. Exp. Bib., 46-49; N. C. B., 140; Hast. Bib. Dict.

8. Pergamum. N. C. B., 141-142; Exp. Bib., 49-51; Hast. Bib. Dict.

9. Laodicea. N. C. B., 155; Orr, *Neglected Factors*, 111; Hast. Bib. Dict.

10. Meaning of the period of three and one-half years, forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days (Rev. 11: 2, 3; 12: 6, 14; 13: 5). N. C. B., 218, 219, 237; Bartlet, 392, 395; William Milligan, 203; Temple Bible, xlii.

11. The precious stones used in the symbolism of the Holy City (Rev. 21: 19, 20). Meyer, 481, 482; Hast. Bib. Dict., art. "Stones, Precious."

12. The invitation, "Come" (Rev. 22: 7). Terry, *Biblical Apocalypics*, 475; Exp. Bib., 386-388.

SIXTH DAY. Memory Verse, Rev. 21: 4.

Read Rev. 21. "The New Jerusalem is an ideal picture of the true Church now. . . . The picture may not yet be realized in fullness, but every blessing lined in upon its canvas is in principle the believer's now, and will be more and more his in actual experience as he opens his eye to see and his heart to receive."¹⁸

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS.

1. What three apostles most fully gave direction to Early Church growth? See Narrative.

2. What word gives the class of writing to which the Book of Revelation belongs? See Narrative.

3. What place does the Apocalypse give to Christ and his atoning work? See Narrative.

¹⁸William Milligan, 229, 231.

4. Why did John need to conceal his message from Roman officers or spies? See Narrative.

5. What is the most probable date of the book? See Narrative.

6. How may the central portion of the Apocalypse be summed up? See Narrative.

7. What is to be the final result of Christ's conflict with evil?

8. Is John's vision of the New Jerusalem to be applied to the future alone, or also to the present?

SEVENTH DAY. Memory Verse, Rev. 22:17.

Read Rev. 22. "The description of this heavenly city—the blessed goal of the Christian's longings and hopes—is probably the most magnificent passage in all apocalyptic literature. It has proved its power in the Christian life of all subsequent times, and its tones will be heard at the graves of the dead to the remotest age of Christian history. These pictures represent realities. Our Apocalypse stands as a splendid testimony to the undaunted confidence of a persecuted Church that goodness is mightier than evil, and that the kingdom of God will at length prevail."¹⁹

Memorize Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5.

PERSONAL THOUGHT.

"He that overcometh, I will give . . . to sit down with me in my throne." (Rev. 3:21.)

It is the overcoming life that secures the reward, presented under the different figures in the letters of these chapters, and in Rev. 21:7.

Consider how much it means "to eat of the tree of life," "not to be hurt of the second death," to be given "the hidden manna," the "white stone," and "authority over the nations," to be "arrayed in white garments," to have one's name in "the book of life," be an heir in the New Jerusalem, a "pillar" in the temple of God, and to sit enthroned with Christ. Are you overcoming?

¹⁹Stevens, 562, 563.

STUDY IX

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE TARRYING—GOD IS LIGHT, GOD IS LOVE

SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS AND LEADERS.

TIME, 88-95 A. D.

PLACE, Ephesus.

REFERENCES: 1, 2, and 3 John—McClymont, 144-149; Alexander Ramsay, 27-47, 243-348. Gospel of John—McClymont, 33-40; Alexander Ramsay, 24-34; Barth, entire.

KEY-WORD, Eternal Life. Especially as used by John, eternal life does not mean something in the future. It means life which is life indeed; life raised to the *n*th power; the more abundant life; the Spirit-filled, victorious life; the life of deepest, sweetest service; our true and only life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

CHART

OUTLINE OF 1 JOHN¹

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Introduction | 1:1-4 |
| A. The problem of life and those to whom
it is proposed | 1:5—2:17 |
| B. The conflict of truth and falsehood and
falsehood without and within | 2:18—4:6 |
| C. The Christian life; the victory of faith.. | 4:7—5:21 |

MOTTO: "A loveless Christianity is an impossibility. It is he who dwelleth in love, and only he who dwelleth in God."²

FIRST DAY. Memory Verse, 1 John 1:3.

Read 1 John 1.

NARRATIVE.—John first appears in the opening chapter of the Gospel that bears his name as a disciple of John

¹Illustrated Bible Dictionary (1908) following Westcott. Price, \$5 net.

²Alexander Ramsay, p. 38.

the Baptist. With Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael, he follows Christ. When our Lord began his Galilean ministry, he more formally called James and John; and these with Peter became the inner circle of his apostles. As such, they were with Christ when Jairus's daughter was raised, also on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the Garden of Gethsemane. James and John were so severe and intense in spirit that Jesus called them "Boanerges," or "Sons of thunder." They desired that fire be called down from heaven upon the unfriendly Samaritan village. But John, who was probably Christ's youngest apostle, became known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," leaned on his breast at the Last Supper, and had committed to his care the mother of Christ at the crucifixion. He outran Peter on the way to the tomb, but stopped at the entrance, while his impetuous companion went in, when he followed. This shows that he was not the man to take the initiative, and in the Book of Acts it is "Peter and John" who healed the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, suffered arrest, and later visited Samaria to conserve the revival under Philip. Yet his future prominence in the Church was indicated in Christ's last interview with some of the apostles at the Sea of Galilee, and he is mentioned (Gal 2:9) among the "pillar" apostles, "who gave to me and Barnabas," says Paul, "the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision." This agreement was not meant to be strictly and permanently binding; for the Lord had commanded The Twelve to go and make disciples of "all the nations." As to his presence and authority in Ephesus, Ramsay says: "We must recognize the authoritative succession in the Asian [province of Asia] Churches of those three writers: first and earliest, him who speaks in the Pauline letters; secondly, him who wrote 'to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in . . . Asia' and the

other provinces [Peter]; lastly, the author of the Seven Letters." "John's authority was necessarily connected with his publicly recognized position as the head of those Asian Churches."³ At what time John went to Ephesus is not known, but his presence and later ministry and influence in the province of Asia are well attested.⁴

Very beautiful are the accounts that have come down from later writers concerning St. John's saintly character and words and deeds in his apostolic ministry and serene old age at Ephesus. Some of these are plainly legendary, while others are so in keeping with what is known of him in the New Testament that they may be accepted, at least as filling out the ideal of a life of stainless purity and unremitting devotion and love. A touching story is told by Clement of Alexandria of his reclaiming a youth who had been converted to the faith, but had fallen into evil ways and joined a band of robbers, even becoming their chief. When St. John again visited the city where he had committed the soul of this young man to the care of the bishop, and learned of what had occurred, he instantly left the church, in his habit as he was, and, arriving at the brigands' outpost, permitted himself to be captured, that he might be led to their chief. At sight of the apostle the young man fled, but John with swifter feet pursued and overtook him, and with entreaties and prayers won him back to Christ. More familiarly known is the relation by Jerome of how the venerable man, too old to walk, would be carried into the church, and used constantly to address his flock with the words, "Little children, love one another." When they, impatient at this repetition, asked for something new, he replied, "That precept of the Lord suffices for you." Thus in serenity and peace he fell asleep about the close of the first century, with which his life had largely

John's
Closing
Years

³Ramsay (Letters), 81.

⁴Hast. Bib. Dict., II, 682, 683. See also Benham, 49; Ramsay (Letters), 156, 157.

run parallel. "If St. John really lived till the time of Trajan—that is, till about A. D. 100—there is no reason why Polycarp should not have known him."⁵

Date of John's Epistles and Gospel In referring to the closing chapter of the Fourth Gospel, Bartlet observes: "This would point to a time somewhere about 90, when John would be hardly less than eighty years of age. Putting the Gospel, then, about 85-90 A. D., one would put the Epistles a little earlier."⁶ "It is not quite certain which of the two books was written earlier; probably they were written about the same time, so that an approximate date, A. D. 90-100, if accepted for the Gospel, will also hold good for the Epistle."⁷ These statements give the general idea of many scholars as to about the date of these writings.

First John So fully does the First Epistle of John belong to the General Epistles that it has no salutation nor any personal allusion. The name of John is not mentioned, and there is no indication of those for whom the letter was intended. Yet it is easy to perceive in the Epistle the writer of the Gospel. It not only has the same type of words and phrases, but similar deep and spiritual thoughts. "It is really a manual of Christian ethics, the answer of Christianity to the question which has been asked by the wisest heathens, 'What is the true end and object of man, and how can it be obtained?' St. John answers, 'It is to be found in the Word of Life, in the only begotten Son, who has brought union with the Eternal within our reach.'"⁸ New forms of heresy have sprung up, under the lead of Cerinthus and others, who either taught that all matter is evil, and therefore the body of Christ was a mere seeming, not a reality, or else taught that the Divine nature could not enter into his sufferings in the atonement, and that Christ was separated from the man Jesus before he was

⁵Hast. Bib. Dict., II, 682.

⁶Bartlet, 436-438.

⁷Professor W. H. Bennett, N. C. B., 76.

⁸Canon Benham, Temple Bible, xvii, xviii.

crucified.⁹ John powerfully confutes these errors, as he was best fitted to do of all men then living, because of his personal knowledge of Christ.

John's Second and Third Epistles are classed in date and general circumstances with the First, but are very brief. The Third letter, at verse 9, has a reference to another writing, which is thought to be the Second Epistle.¹⁰ Both shed much light upon the way in which life and belief were developing, for the Second letter is probably to a Church under the title of "the elect lady." Diotrephes, the chief pastor or "bishop" of this Church, appears to sympathize with the doctrines which John opposes, so that the situation resembles that of Paul and the Corinthian Church when Second Corinthians was written.¹¹

Probably with the writing of John's Gospel¹² the canonical books of the New Testament were completed, and the crowning element of Early Church life was supplied. It declares its purpose more fully than do the Synoptic writers, and reveals in its whole structure that it was prepared, as John says, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."¹³ And this may well be the aim of every writing relating to God and his Holy Word.

It will help us to understand the Epistles of John, if we remember that they were addressed to an age that had begun to refine away the simple historical facts of Christ's life, and to substitute a pretentious philosophical profundity for the elementary Christian virtues.

⁹Bartlet, 428-433, 436. ¹⁰Bartlet, 420; N. C. B., 327. ¹¹Bartlet, 418-423.

¹²It will be understood that no attempt is made here to give a presentation of the Fourth Gospel, as it is characterized and treated at length in Alexander Ramsay and Barth.

¹³John 20:31; Purves, sec. 315; Bartlet, 434-441; McClymont, 33-40; Hast. Bib. Dict., II, 694-722.

SECOND DAY. Memory Verse, 1 John 2:1.

Read 1 John 2. On the difficult verse, 1:10, Bartlet has this statement: "If we go still further and say, 'We have never sinned,' we make him out false—since he has revealed himself as a redeeming God. Yet, while none is impeccable, sin is no dire necessity. John's very object in writing is to teach the secret of exemption from sin. To abide in Him is to overcome sin. There is infinite power in the bearing away of sin by the sinless Lamb."¹⁴

SCRIPTURE SCHEME.

1 John: Introduction, 1:1-4; God is Light, 1:5—2:28; God is Love, 2:29—5:12; Conclusion, 5:13-21.

2 John: Salutation, verses 1-3; Occasion of the Epistle, 4; Exhortation to love and obedience, 5, 6; Warning against false teachers, 7-11; Conclusion, 12, 13.

3 John: Salutation to and commendation of Gaius, verses 1-4; In praise of hospitality, 5-8; Denunciation of Diotrephes, 9, 10; Basis of judgment, 11; Commendation of Demetrius, 12; Conclusion, 13, 14.

THIRD DAY. Memory Verses, 1 John 3:2, 3.

Read 1 John 3. Note that John lays stress upon the point that "we are" the children of God (verse 1). It is not a figure of speech, but a fact of our spiritual nature. And the hope of becoming more fully like Christ should lead each to purify himself. In verses 6, 9, John asserts that, in its essence, this new life is the very opposite of sin, and goes on to show that it is love revealing itself in practical deeds.

MAP AND LESSON OUTLINE.

Summary of the Apostle John's life and work.

4, 22, 34, 30, 45. *John's course from Jerusalem to Ephesus* (?65 A. D.).

The successive relations of Paul, Peter, and John to the Churches of the province of Asia.

¹⁴Bartlet, 426, 427.

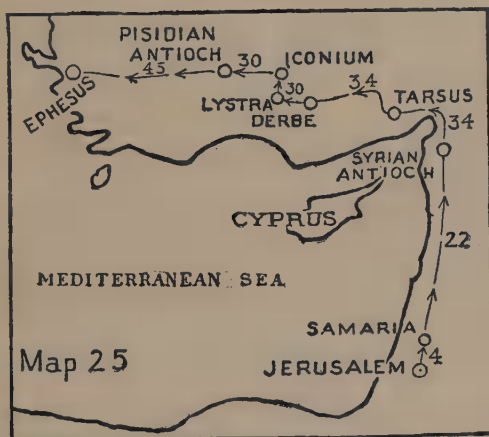
The accounts of John's saintly character, words, and deeds, and his serene old age at Ephesus.

The touching story of his reclaiming a youthful Christian from a band of brigands.

His last counsel: "Little children, love one another."

His writing of his Epistles and the Fourth Gospel.

117 (Map 23). Locate the origin of the Gospel of John at Ephesus (92-95 A. D.).



MAP 25. JERUSALEM TO EPHEBUS
The Apostle John's Change of Field

Make a map of Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor, and mark the course of John from Jerusalem to Ephesus. (See Map 25. Also locate on Map 23 the production of the Gospel of John at Ephesus.)

FOURTH DAY. Memory Verses, 1 John 4: 18, 19.

Read 1 John 4. As chapter 1: 5 states the great truth which gives direction to the first part of the Epistle, "God is light," so this chapter (verses 8, 16) declares the crowning truth of all revelation, "God is love," which controls the latter part of the Epistle.

GENERAL REFERENCES.

Purves, secs. 310-317; Bartlet, 418-441, 493-496; Blaikie, 489-493; McClymont, 33-40, 144-150; Stevens, 167-176, 564-592; Farrar (E. D.), 451-464, 566-677; Benham, 46-99; Hast. Bib. Dict., II, 681-742.

FIFTH DAY. Memory Verse, 1 John 5:12.

Read 1 John 5. Note that faith in Christ is the condition of spiritual life by which the world is overcome (verses 4, 5). In verses 18-20 is given a concluding summary.

TOPICS FOR PERSONAL INVESTIGATION AND FOR ASSIGNMENT
IN CLASS WORK.

1. Belief, obedience, and love the enduring motive forces of the Church. Acts 5:14, 32; 10:43; James 1:6-8, 22, 25; 2:8, 15, 16; 1 Thess. 1:3; Gal. 5:6; 1 Cor. 13:13; Rom. 1:5; 13:8; Eph. 3:17-19; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:21, 22; Jude, verses 20, 21; Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:1, 2.

2. Last years of St. John. Cam. Bib., 9-27; Farrar (E. D.), 445-464.

3. John's definitions of God. Stevens, 177-179, 569-576, 592.

4. The Logos, as a term for Christ. Stevens, 577-585; Cam. Bib., 73; Hast. Bib. Dict.

5. "I write unto you, young men" (1 John 2:13, 14). Farrar (E. D.), 620, 621; N. C. B., 297.

6. Sonship and Christlikeness (1 John 3:1-3). Stevens, 590-592; Cam. Bib., 120-122.

7. Perfect love casting out fear (1 John 4:18). Cam. Bib., 152.

8. Sin unto death (1 John 5:16, 17). Farrar (E. D.), 651-657; N. C. B., 318; Hast. Bib. Dict., IV, 535.

9. Eternal life (1 John 5:20). Stevens, 224-233; Hast. Bib. Dict., II, 732.

SIXTH DAY. Memory Verse, 2 John, verse 5.

Read 2 John. The best view is that the "elect lady" (verse 1) means the Church to which John writes, and

"thine elect sister" (verse 13) is the Ephesian Church, or some other one, from which John writes.¹⁵

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS.

1. What terms may be used to describe John's closing years? See Narrative.
2. Give about the date of the writing of John's Epistles and Gospel. See Narrative.
3. What two expressions or truths may be said to give direction to the thought of the First Epistle of John? See Fourth Day.
4. Is the Second Epistle of John written to an individual or to a Church? See Sixth Day.
5. What is the purpose for which the Gospel of John was written?

SEVENTH DAY. Memory Verse, 3 John, verse 11.

Read 3 John. Says Salmond: "The great interest of this Epistle lies in the insight which it gives into the ordinary life of the Christian communities of those early times and this wide Asiatic territory. It places us at the point of transition from the apostolic age to the post-apostolic."¹⁶ At this point, therefore, the study of the Church of the First Apostles appropriately closes.

PERSONAL THOUGHT.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 4:11.)

It is well that the last great word of God's long course of disclosure of his feeling and thought toward man, as given in the Bible, should be that of John's Epistle and Gospel, "God so loved."

What should be our first and last thought and feeling toward God and toward one another?

¹⁵Bartlet, 418; Cam. Bib., 175, 185.

¹⁶S. D. F. Salmond, *Hast. Bib. Dict.*, II, 742.

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